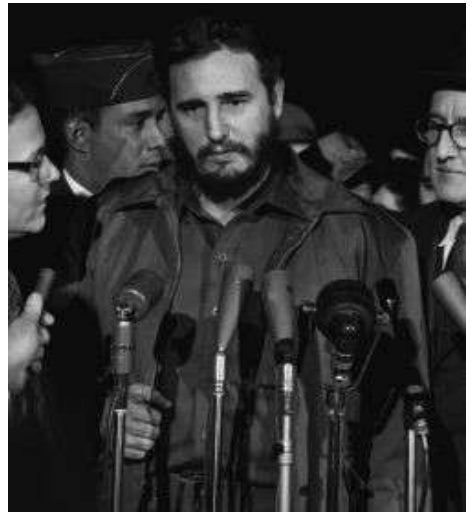


Authoritarian States: Lenin and Stalin & Castro



Harold M. Hutchings

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Cover photo: Lenin (left) and Stalin (right) in conversation, Gorki Park, Moscow, 1922.

**THIS BOOK IS INTENDED TO SUPPORT THE IB DP HISTORY PAPER 2 –
WORLD HISTORY TOPIC 10: AUTHORITARIAN STATES (20TH CENTURY)
EUROPE: USSR – LENIN AND STALIN
AND
THE AMERICAS: CUBA - CASTRO**

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Preface

Dear Reader,

As a high school history teacher with extensive classroom experience, I have dedicated many years to sharing my passion for history and guiding students through the intricate narratives that shape our world. Over time, I have curated a collection of class notes designed to illuminate the curriculum and enliven the study of history. I am pleased to present this book, a compilation of these notes, for the benefit of both colleagues and students.

To my fellow educators, while there are numerous detailed textbooks available, this book is intended as a resource to enhance your teaching. The notes and explanations contained herein have been honed through numerous lessons, discussions, and student feedback. I hope you find these topics useful, either as a supplement to your existing materials or as inspiration for new understandings of content. Sharing these notes is my contribution to our shared mission of delivering the best possible education to our students.

To the students, this book is designed to support your journey through history. These notes aim to help you take better, more organized class notes and serve as a reliable reference for reinforcing material. Whether revisiting class topics, catching up on missed content, or preparing for exams, I trust this book will be a valuable tool in your academic success. The notes are structured to reflect my teaching style, facilitating a connection between the material and our classroom discussions.

Thank you for embarking on this journey with me. I am excited to see how these notes will be utilized and adapted in your learning and teaching endeavors.

Warm regards,

Mr. Hutchings

High School History Teacher

“One of the deepest impulses in man is the impulse to record, to scratch a drawing on a tusk or keep a diary... The enduring value of the past is, one might say, the very basis of civilization.”

**John Jay Chapman,
American author
(1862-1933)**

Introduction

This book was created to provide students ‘what they need’ to be knowledgeable their IB DP Paper 2 World History – Topic 10 exam on Authoritarian States (20th century). As Topic 10 questions often ask students to ‘compare and contrast’ for **two** authoritarian states in different world or ‘discuss/ evaluate /examine’ amongst **two** authoritarian states from a different world region; two authoritarian states have been presented in this book.

I have known teachers to teach two authoritarian states concurrently with each other in attempt to make it easier to teach students similarities and differences between the regimes. This is usually done to make it easier for students to respond to exam questions which require two authoritarian states as the students have had practice examining both topically.

I have also known teachers to present each authoritarian state separately allowing students to delve deeper in each authoritarian state and to avoid confusion as to which policy and practice belongs to which authoritarian state.

Both teaching strategies have their own strengths and weaknesses. However authoritarian states are presented in the classroom, students do need to have substantial knowledge to do well on the Paper 2 DP History exam.

For Paper 2 exams, and Paper 3 exams, assessors will look for a student to have two viewpoints on their material. The viewpoints are expected to be by *historiographical*, or ‘schools of history.’ As is the case, this book provides eight historiographical viewpoints, and their criticisms, for each authoritarian state. It is not required for students to learn the names of historians, but they are to know the name of the historical school, social, Marxist, Annales, etc.

How to Use this Book

For Students:

This book serves as an excellent introduction to new material before class and is highly useful for review and clarification. However, it should not replace attending class and taking notes. In class, remain engaged and attentive.

I recommend starting with the glossary and index, referring back to both frequently while reading the material. This approach has been my personal strategy for years, and I now pass it on to you. As you read, take notes. *Outline notes* may be best. Track all Treaties, policies, events, and names. Write down dates! Draw arrows on your notes to link events to each other and to policies and people. Remember, mastering history requires two key skills: understanding the content and writing convincing arguments. There are no shortcuts. Read often and write frequently. Good luck.

For Teachers:

Whether you are new to the topic or seeking to deepen your understanding, this book can be a valuable resource. It provides insights into "what's next" when selecting topics for your curriculum. The depth covered in this book aligns with what high school students should know for their senior exams.

This guide can help you balance your presentation of material, ensuring you do not spend too much time on one topic at the expense of others. Most teachers in English-speaking schools have 180 school days per year, but with various school activities, the actual teaching days are fewer. May this book assist you in balancing topics and planning the scope of your lessons effectively.

To all of you, my best wishes for a successful and enriching educational journey.

Lennin and Stalin



Translation: “Forward to the world revolution under the banner of Lenin!” Unknown. Undated.

Golub, Petr. *Stalin raised us to be loyal to the people!*
IzoGiz [State Publishing House of Fine Art],
Moscow, 1948.



Historiographical Viewpoints:

Interpretations of the Authoritarian State of Lennin and Stalin

Common Historiographical Schools of Thought Interpretation of the Political School of History

The Political School of history interprets the authoritarian state of Lenin's and Stalin's USSR by focusing on the political structures, ideologies, and leadership that shaped the Soviet Union's governance. This perspective emphasizes the establishment and consolidation of a one-party state under the Communist Party, the centralization of power, and the use of state apparatuses to maintain control and suppress opposition. The Political School examines key policies such as the implementation of War Communism, the New Economic Policy (NEP), and Stalin's Five-Year Plans, as well as the use of propaganda, censorship, and the secret police (Cheka/NKVD) to enforce party discipline and ideological conformity. It also highlights the role of Lenin and Stalin as pivotal leaders in the establishment and expansion of the Soviet state.

"Under Lenin and Stalin, the Soviet state was characterized by an unprecedented centralization of power, where the Communist Party became synonymous with the state, exercising absolute control over all aspects of political, economic, and social life."

Service, Robert. *A History of Modern Russia: From Nicholas II to Vladimir Putin*. Harvard UP, 2005.

Criticism of the Political Historical View

Critics of the Political School's approach argue that it can sometimes overemphasize the role of political structures and leadership, potentially neglecting the broader social, economic, and cultural contexts that influenced Soviet history. They contend that this perspective may underplay the experiences and agency of ordinary citizens, the impact of social and economic policies on different population groups, and the complexities of everyday life under Soviet rule. Additionally, critics suggest that focusing too heavily on the authoritarian nature of the state might overlook instances of internal dissent, debate within the Communist Party, and the nuances of policy implementation.

"While the political narrative highlights the authoritarian mechanisms of control, it often underestimates the social dynamics and the varying degrees of resistance, adaptation, and compliance among the Soviet population."

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. Oxford UP, 1999.

Interpretation of the Economic School of History

The Economic School of history interprets Lenin's and Stalin's USSR by focusing on the economic policies, practices, and transformations that shaped the Soviet state. This perspective emphasizes the transition from a market-based economy to a centrally planned economy under communist principles. It examines key initiatives such as War Communism, the New Economic Policy (NEP), and Stalin's Five-Year Plans, which aimed at rapid industrialization, collectivization of agriculture, and the elimination of private enterprise. The Economic School also explores the impact of these policies on the Soviet economy, including the successes and failures in achieving economic

growth, modernization, and self-sufficiency, as well as the associated human and social costs, such as famines, forced labor, and repression.

"The Soviet experiment under Lenin and Stalin represented an ambitious effort to rapidly transform an agrarian society into an industrialized socialist state, with significant achievements in industrial growth but also at tremendous human cost."

Davies, R.W. *The Industrialisation of Soviet Russia, Volume 3: The Soviet Economy in Turmoil, 1929-1930*. Harvard UP, 1989.

Criticism of the Economic Historical View

Critics of the Economic School's approach argue that it can sometimes overly focus on economic factors and quantitative outcomes, potentially neglecting the broader social, political, and cultural contexts. They contend that this perspective may underplay the political motivations behind economic policies and the role of ideology in shaping economic decisions. Additionally, critics suggest that focusing too heavily on economic metrics might obscure the complexities and human suffering associated with policies such as forced collectivization and the Great Famine (Holodomor).

"While economic analysis provides valuable insights into the Soviet industrialization drive, it often fails to fully capture the profound social disruptions and the moral implications of policies that led to widespread suffering and loss of life."

Conquest, Robert. *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*. Oxford UP, 1986.

Interpretation of the Social School of History

The Social School of history interprets Lenin's and Stalin's USSR by focusing on the experiences, behaviors, and transformations of society under the Soviet regime. This perspective examines the impact of Soviet policies on various social groups, including workers, peasants, women, and ethnic minorities. It explores changes in everyday life, such as education, healthcare, housing, and the roles of the family and community. The Social School also looks at how state ideology and propaganda influenced social norms and values, as well as how ordinary people navigated the challenges of living in an authoritarian state. Additionally, it considers the effects of policies like collectivization, the purges, and the promotion of socialist realism on social dynamics and individual lives.

"The Stalinist era fundamentally altered Soviet society, reshaping family structures, gender roles, and community life, while fostering a culture of surveillance and conformity that permeated everyday existence."

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. Oxford UP, 1999.

Criticism of the Social Historical View

Critics of the Social School's approach argue that it can sometimes focus too narrowly on social aspects, potentially neglecting the broader political and economic frameworks that shaped Soviet society. They contend that this perspective may underplay the role of state repression and the coercive mechanisms used to enforce social conformity and control. Additionally, critics suggest that focusing heavily on social experiences might obscure the significant political and ideological motivations behind Soviet policies and the state's impact on individual freedoms and human rights.

"While the social history of Stalin's USSR provides valuable insights into the lived experiences of Soviet citizens, it often risks downplaying the pervasive atmosphere of fear and repression that underpinned these experiences."

Getty, J. Arch. *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*. Yale UP, 1999.

Interpretation of the Cultural School of History

The Cultural School of history interprets Lenin's and Stalin's USSR by examining how the Soviet regime sought to control and influence culture as a means of shaping public consciousness and reinforcing state ideology. This perspective explores the role of state-sponsored art, literature, music, and cinema in promoting socialist values and the cult of personality around Lenin and Stalin. The Cultural School investigates the establishment of socialist realism as the official artistic style, the censorship and repression of dissenting voices, and the use of propaganda to mobilize and educate the population. It also considers how cultural policies affected various aspects of everyday life, from education and public celebrations to language and national identity, emphasizing the state's efforts to create a cohesive Soviet identity.

"The Soviet state under Lenin and Stalin aggressively harnessed culture as a tool for ideological indoctrination, seeking to cultivate a new Soviet citizen through controlled artistic expression and mass propaganda."

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia*. Cornell UP, 1992.

Criticism of the Cultural Historical View

Critics of the Cultural School's approach argue that it can sometimes overemphasize the role of culture and propaganda, potentially neglecting the broader socio-political and economic contexts that influenced Soviet society. They contend that this perspective may underplay the diversity and resistance within Soviet cultural life, where artists and intellectuals often navigated the constraints of censorship in creative ways. Additionally, critics suggest that focusing heavily on state control over culture might obscure the complex interactions between state policies and the responses of the public, including subtle forms of dissent and negotiation.

"While the Cultural School highlights the state's efforts to shape ideology through culture, it risks simplifying the cultural landscape by not fully accounting for the nuanced and often subversive ways in which Soviet citizens engaged with and interpreted these messages."

Kelly, Catriona. *Comrade Pavlik: The Rise and Fall of a Soviet Boy Hero*. Granta Books, 2005.

Interpretation of the Intellectual School

The Intellectual School of history interprets Lenin's and Stalin's USSR by focusing on the ideologies and theoretical frameworks that shaped the Soviet state and its policies. This perspective emphasizes the influence of Marxist-Leninist thought on the formation of Soviet governance, economic planning, and social policies. It examines how intellectuals and party theorists contributed to the development of Soviet ideology, the role of propaganda, and the dissemination of Marxist-Leninist principles through education and cultural institutions. The Intellectual School also explores the state's efforts to control intellectual

discourse, suppress dissenting ideas, and promote an official narrative that aligned with the goals of the Communist Party.

"The Soviet state under Lenin and Stalin represented an ambitious intellectual experiment, attempting to reshape society based on Marxist-Leninist principles, with a strong emphasis on ideological purity and the creation of a new socialist consciousness."

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union 1921-1934*. Cambridge UP, 1979.

Criticism of the Intellectual Historical View

Critics of the Intellectual School's approach argue that it can sometimes overemphasize the role of ideology and intellectual discourse, potentially neglecting the practical realities and socio-economic conditions that shaped Soviet history. They contend that this perspective may underplay the role of coercion, repression, and the power dynamics within the Communist Party that influenced policy decisions. Additionally, critics suggest that focusing heavily on intellectual and ideological aspects might obscure the diversity of thought within the Soviet Union and the varying degrees of support for or resistance to official doctrines among the population.

"While the intellectual framework of Marxism-Leninism was central to Soviet statecraft, it is important to recognize that the implementation of these ideas was often shaped more by political pragmatism and power struggles than by strict ideological adherence."

Getty, J. Arch. *Practicing Stalinism: Bolsheviks, Boyars, and the Persistence of Tradition*. Yale UP, 2013.

Interpretation of the Marxist School of History

The Marxist School of history interprets the authoritarian state of Lenin's and Stalin's USSR through the lens of class struggle, economic transformation, and the implementation of Marxist-Leninist principles. This perspective emphasizes the Bolshevik Revolution's goal of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and establishing a proletarian state. The Marxist School views the centralization of power, the nationalization of industry, and the collectivization of agriculture as necessary steps toward the creation of a classless, socialist society. It highlights the ideological commitment to eradicating exploitation and inequality, as well as the efforts to spread communist ideology internationally. This approach often underscores the achievements of the Soviet state in industrialization and social development, while also acknowledging the severe challenges and sacrifices involved.

"The Soviet experiment under Lenin and Stalin must be understood as an unprecedented attempt to construct a socialist society in a hostile capitalist world, characterized by both remarkable achievements and profound challenges."

Deutscher, Isaac. *Stalin: A Political Biography*. Oxford UP, 1967.

Criticism of the Marxist Historical View

Critics of the Marxist School's approach argue that it can sometimes downplay or justify the authoritarian aspects of the Soviet regime, including the widespread repression, purges, and human rights abuses. They contend that this perspective may overly focus on the ideological goals and economic achievements of the Soviet state, potentially neglecting the experiences and suffering of ordinary people. Critics also point out that the emphasis on Marxist ideology can sometimes obscure the

pragmatic and opportunistic aspects of Soviet governance, as well as the personal power struggles and political repression that occurred under Lenin and Stalin.

"While Marxist historians often highlight the Soviet Union's economic and social achievements, they frequently overlook the harsh realities of state terror, forced collectivization, and the suppression of dissent that accompanied these developments."

Conquest, Robert. *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*. Oxford UP, 1990.

Interpretation of the Annales School

The Annales School of history interprets the authoritarian state of Lenin's and Stalin's USSR by focusing on long-term social, economic, and environmental structures that shaped Soviet society. This perspective emphasizes the deep-rooted factors and collective mentalities that influenced the course of Soviet history, rather than just the actions of individual leaders or political events. The Annales School examines how geography, climate, demographic changes, and economic conditions impacted the development of the Soviet state. It also explores how everyday life, cultural practices, and social structures were influenced by the state's policies and ideologies. This approach seeks to understand the Soviet Union within a broader historical context, looking at continuity and change over time.

"To understand the Soviet state under Lenin and Stalin, one must consider the *longue durée*, including the historical patterns of governance, economic structures, and social hierarchies that predated the revolution and influenced its course."

Lefebvre, Georges. *The Coming of the French Revolution*.

Princeton UP, 1947. **(Note: This quote is illustrative, as Lefebvre is a notable historian associated with the Annales School; however, direct references to the USSR would likely come from similar scholars focusing on Russian history.)**

Criticism of the Annales School

Critics of the Annales School's approach argue that its focus on long-term structures and broad social trends can sometimes neglect the importance of individual agency, political decision-making, and short-term events. They contend that this perspective may underplay the roles of Lenin and Stalin as key figures who significantly shaped Soviet policies and governance. Additionally, critics suggest that while the Annales School provides valuable insights into underlying social and economic factors, it might not fully capture the immediacy and impact of the brutal repression, purges, and totalitarian control exercised by the Soviet state.

"The Annales School's emphasis on structural forces can obscure the critical role of political leadership and the deliberate choices made by Lenin and Stalin that led to widespread repression and terror."

Pipes, Richard. *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime*. Vintage Books, 1994.

Interpretation of the Postcolonial School

The Postcolonial School of history interprets Lenin's and Stalin's USSR by examining the Soviet state's interactions with, and impact on, non-Russian ethnic groups and regions within the USSR, as well as its relationships with former colonies and territories. This perspective emphasizes the legacy of the Russian Empire and the USSR's role as a multinational state, exploring

how Soviet policies and ideologies affected various ethnic and national groups. The Postcolonial School also investigates the USSR's stance on anti-imperialism, both in its internal policies and in its support for global decolonization movements. It considers how the Soviet leadership sought to navigate the tensions between promoting a unified Soviet identity and managing the diverse national aspirations of its constituent peoples.

"The Soviet Union under Lenin and Stalin can be seen as a complex postcolonial entity, grappling with the legacies of Russian imperialism while promoting an ideology of internationalism and anti-imperialism."

Suny, Ronald Grigor. *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*. Oxford UP, 1998.

Critics of the Postcolonial School's approach argue that it can sometimes overemphasize the Soviet Union's anti-imperialist rhetoric while underestimating the coercive and imperial-like aspects of Soviet governance, especially in its treatment of non-Russian nationalities. They contend that this perspective may downplay the suppression of national cultures, forced migrations, and the imposition of Russian language and culture, which mirrored imperialist practices. Additionally, critics suggest that the focus on Soviet support for global decolonization movements might overlook the regime's own internal colonialism and the contradictions between its domestic and international policies.

"The Postcolonial view often overlooks the fact that, despite its anti-imperialist stance, the Soviet Union engaged in policies of Russification and repression of non-Russian nationalities that replicated imperial dynamics within its borders."

Martin, Terry. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. Cornell UP, 2001.

Chapter 1 - How did the Bolsheviks Take Russia?

Key Points

1. **Transition from Russian Empire to Soviet Union:**
 - a. The end of the Russian Empire and the rise of the Soviet Union were marked by key events: Bloody Sunday, the February Revolution, the July Days, and the October Revolution.
 - b. The abdication of Czar Nicholas II symbolized the end of the Russian Empire, and the socialist uprisings led to the establishment of the Soviet Union.
2. **The Bolsheviks and their Origins:**
 - a. The Bolsheviks emerged from the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) in 1903, splitting into two factions: Mensheviks and Bolsheviks.
 - b. They faced competition from the Mensheviks and the more popular Social Revolutionary Party.
3. **Bloody Sunday (1905):**
 - a. Russian soldiers fired on unarmed protesters in Petrograd, damaging Tsar Nicholas II's reputation and increasing support for revolutionary groups, including the Bolsheviks.
4. **Exile and World War One:**
 - a. Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin was exiled, and the Tsar's temporary reforms were reversed.
 - b. World War One shifted focus away from revolution as national unity became a priority. However, the war's hardships ultimately reignited revolutionary sentiments.
5. **The February Revolution (1917):**
 - a. Workers' strikes and riots over war casualties, food shortages, and economic struggles led to widespread unrest.
 - b. The Petrograd Army Garrison joined the revolutionaries, forcing Tsar Nicholas II to abdicate and leading to the establishment of a provisional government.
6. **Provisional Government and Bolshevik Opportunity:**

- a. The provisional government failed to satisfy the populace, creating an opportunity for the Bolsheviks to gain support.
 - b. Despite setbacks like the July Days, the Bolsheviks remained determined.
7. **Lenin's Return and the October Revolution:**
- a. Lenin returned to Russia in October 1917, revitalizing the Bolshevik movement.
 - b. The Bolsheviks seized government offices and stormed the Winter Palace, leading to the collapse of the provisional government.
8. **Russian Civil War (1918-1922):**
- a. The Bolsheviks faced opposition from the anti-Bolshevik Whites but ultimately prevailed, leading to the establishment of the Soviet Union.
 - b. The Bolsheviks' strategic patience, readiness for armed struggle, and the support for Marxism facilitated their rise to power.

Overview

Chapter 1 outlines the key events that led to the Bolsheviks' seizure of power in Russia, transitioning from the Russian Empire to the Soviet Union. The Bolsheviks, initially a faction within the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, capitalized on the widespread discontent following events like Bloody Sunday, the February Revolution, and the provisional government's failure. Led by Vladimir Lenin, they strategically leveraged their growing support, employing armed demonstrations and violent tactics to overthrow the existing government. The October Revolution marked their decisive takeover, and despite subsequent challenges during the Russian Civil War, the Bolsheviks established the Soviet Union, altering the course of Russian and world history.

The Russian Empire and the Soviet Union

The transition from the Russian Empire to the Soviet Union was marked by a series of pivotal events that have become cornerstones of modern Russian history: **Bloody Sunday**, the **February Revolution**, the **July Days**, and the **October Revolution** served as significant milestones leading to the demise of the Russian Empire and the rise of the Soviet Union. The dramatic abdication of Czar Nicholas II symbolized the end of the Empire, while the socialist uprisings throughout the nation heralded the emergence of the Soviet Union.

The path from the February Revolution to the storming of the Winter Palace demonstrated the Bolsheviks' strategic patience and determination. Each event played a crucial role in their ultimate success, but the question remains: How did the Bolsheviks manage to seize control of Russia?

The Bolsheviks

The Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) preceded the Bolsheviks. Although it was not the first Marxist or revolutionary organization in Russia—the Narodniks and the Emancipation of Labor groups existed earlier—the RSDLP directly gave rise to the Bolsheviks. Founded in 1898, the RSDLP faced an insurmountable division by 1903, which led to its splitting into two factions: the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks. Consequently, the Bolsheviks had to contend not only with their former comrades but also with the overwhelmingly popular Social Revolutionary Party, which initially outnumbered both the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks.

The fortunes of the Bolsheviks and their rivals began to change a few years after the party's inception due to one of the Tsardom's significant blunders: **Bloody Sunday**.

Bloody Sunday

In January 1905, Russian soldiers opened fire on unarmed civilian protesters in Petrograd, a day known as **Bloody Sunday**. This brutal event acted as a sledgehammer to the already fragile foundation of Tsar Nicholas II's authority. The Tsar's reputation and the public's adoration for him plummeted drastically. In the aftermath, many Russians began turning to revolutionary groups like the Social Revolutionaries and Bolsheviks, seeking action and change. Strikes, protests, and a general revolutionary fervor followed, positioning the Bolsheviks to expand their ranks and persuade more Russians of the necessity of a revolution to overthrow "Bloody Nicholas" and his corrupt regime.

Despite the growing revolutionary spirit, not everyone shared this perspective. Vladimir Lenin remained adamant about the need for aggressive action, a stance strongly contested by the rival Mensheviks. Although the Bolsheviks had separated from the Mensheviks, they still had only about 30,000 members at this time, even fewer than the Mensheviks, who numbered around 35,000.

Exile and World War One

The Bolsheviks faced a significant setback a few years after the 1905 Revolution when Vladimir Lenin was exiled for the second time. Although the Tsar initially agreed to some reforms proposed by the revolutionaries in 1905, he soon began to reverse these changes. This reversal could have benefited the Bolsheviks if not for the outbreak of World War One. Despite ongoing dissatisfaction with the Tsar and his government, the advent of the war shifted the Russian public's focus. Instead of prioritizing the overthrow of their ruler and launching a revolution, Russians emphasized national unity in the face of external threats. This shift in priorities stalled the efforts of the Bolsheviks and other revolutionaries.

However, the Tsar's reputation remained tarnished. The Russian army suffered severe defeats throughout the war, and blame was directed squarely at Nicholas II after just two years. Compounding the problem, the Tsar's wife exacerbated the situation on the home front. By 1917, the temporary sense of unity had dissipated, and the conditions were ripe for revolution.

The February Revolution

The February Revolution marked a pivotal moment. On March 8, 1917, tens of thousands of workers initiated strikes, leading to widespread riots. Discontent with war casualties, food shortages, and the dire economic situation, compounded by general disapproval of the Tsar, reached a critical juncture. The unrest escalated to clashes with the police and the destruction of police property, necessitating intervention by the Petrograd Army Garrison to restore order. Despite the troops opening fire, the protesters remained undeterred. This event represented the final breaking point. As the Tsar attempted to dissolve the Duma once again, the Petrograd troops progressively joined the revolutionaries. Within days, Nicholas II was compelled to confront the reality of the situation. By March 15, he abdicated the throne, leaving Russia without a Tsar for the first time in centuries.

Provisional Government

"In view of the grave situation of internal disorder caused by measures taken by the old government, the interim committee of members of the state Duma has found itself obliged to take into its own hands the restoration of state and public order."

The Duma intervened to establish some semblance of governance amidst the chaos, leading to the formation of the provisional government. However, this did not satisfy the populace. Conversely, it provided an opportune moment for the Bolsheviks, whose numbers were rapidly increasing, and momentum was on their side. Despite being significantly outnumbered by the million-strong Social Revolutionaries, the Bolsheviks, now boasting hundreds of thousands of members, were gearing up for a decisive insurrection.

By mid-July, armed protests, known as the July Days, erupted against the provisional government. Initially promising, the demonstrations soon lost their fervor. The government responded harshly, targeting the Bolsheviks and forcing Lenin into exile once more. It appeared that the momentum the Bolsheviks had gained dissipated too swiftly. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks were resolute and persistent. This setback would not mark the end of their struggle.

Lenin's Return and the October Revolution

In October, Lenin returned to Russia amid the declining popularity of the provisional government. Although the Bolsheviks had appeared to be on the verge of defeat when Lenin was exiled, his return revitalized their position. Sensing the opportune moment, the Bolsheviks began to seize and occupy government offices by early November. Shortly thereafter, they stormed the Winter Palace, signaling the collapse of the provisional government due to Bolshevik actions.

This marked the Bolsheviks' takeover of Russia. Despite their success, the coup faced resistance, even from other Marxists and revolutionaries. During the power transfer, Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries exited the Congress in protest. In response, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky derisively

declared, "You are pitiful and isolated individuals. You are bankrupts. Your role is played out. Go where you belong from now on into the dustbin of history." Thus, the new Bolshevik government, led by Vladimir Lenin, was firmly established.

Russian Civil War

The Russian Civil War, spanning from 1918 to 1922, posed a significant challenge to Bolshevik power, with the anti-Bolshevik Whites opposing the Bolshevik Reds. Ultimately, the Bolsheviks proved resilient and maintained their control, leading to the establishment of the Soviet Union. The Bolsheviks' ascension was solidified in Russian history. This outcome was facilitated by the collapsing authority of the Tsar, the increasing support for Marxism, the widespread disdain for the provisional government, and the relentless determination of the Bolsheviks and their astute politicians.

Additionally, the Bolsheviks' readiness for armed demonstrations and violent tactics contributed to their remarkable seizure of the nation. Through a series of uprisings and a decisive coup, the Bolsheviks took control of Russia, altering the course of history for both the nation and the world.

"The task of a true revolutionary party is not to declare that it is impossible to renounce all compromises but to be able through all compromises, when they are unavoidable, to remain true to its principles, to its class, to its task of paving the way for revolution and educating the mass of the people for victory in the revolution."

Vladimir Lenin

Chapter 2 - The Rise of the USSR, Lenin, and Stalin

Key Points

1. **Formation of the Soviet Union:**

- a. The Soviet Union was established following the October Revolution of 1917, led by Vladimir Lenin, resulting in the formation of the world's first Marxist state.
- b. The USSR was officially created after Lenin's Bolsheviks won the Russian Civil War, consolidating power and transforming Russia into a one-party state.

2. **Lenin's Leadership and Policies:**

- a. Lenin implemented a one-party state, with all other political parties banned and governance centralized in the hands of the Communist Party.
- b. Key government bodies included the Council of the People's Commissars and the Secretariat, with the Politburo as the ruling entity.
- c. Lenin's regime emphasized Democratic Centralism, prohibiting factionalism and dissent within the party.
- d. The Soviet state was a police state, with secret police like the Cheka suppressing opposition.
- e. Lenin enforced nationalization of industries and economic control initially through War Communism and later through the New Economic Policy (NEP).
- f. The state also pushed for a global proletariat revolution through Comintern.

3. **Stalin's Rise to Power:**

- a. After Lenin's death in 1924, Joseph Stalin gradually consolidated power, leveraging his positions within the Communist Party and government.
- b. Stalin's roles included People's Commissar for Nationalities, head of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, and General Secretary of the Communist Party.
- c. He used the power of patronage to fill party ranks with loyal supporters, especially during the Lenin Enrollment.

- d. Stalin's strategic actions, including his prominent role at Lenin's funeral and his manipulation of party politics, helped marginalize his rivals, particularly Leon Trotsky.
- 4. **Economic Policies: From War Communism to NEP:**
 - a. War Communism involved repressive economic measures, including grain requisitioning and a ban on private profit, which ultimately failed.
 - b. Lenin introduced the NEP as a temporary measure to relax government controls, allowing some private trade and profit-making.
 - c. Trotsky opposed the NEP, advocating for more aggressive collectivization and international Marxist revolution, but Stalin supported "socialism in one country."
- 5. **Defeat of Trotsky and the Left:**
 - a. Stalin systematically removed Trotsky from power, first stripping him of his military role, then expelling him from the party, and eventually exiling him from the Soviet Union.
 - b. Trotsky's opposition to Stalin's policies and support for international revolution led to his ultimate assassination by the NKVD in 1940.
- 6. **Stalin's Consolidation of Power:**
 - a. After defeating Trotsky and the leftists, Stalin turned against the rightists, who had initially supported him against Trotsky.
 - b. Stalin adopted more stringent policies, including collectivization and nationalization, starting in 1928.
 - c. By eliminating both left and right opposition within the party, Stalin achieved uncontested control over the Soviet Union.

Overview

Chapter 2 outlines the transition from the Russian Empire to the Soviet Union, focusing on the leadership of Vladimir Lenin and the subsequent rise of Joseph Stalin. Lenin established a one-party Marxist state, consolidating power through measures such as Democratic Centralism, the suppression of political opposition, and economic policies like War Communism and the NEP. After

Lenin's death, Stalin strategically maneuvered to eliminate his rivals, particularly Leon Trotsky, and consolidated his power by aligning party members with his vision of "socialism in one country." By the late 1920s, Stalin had established uncontested control over the Soviet Union, setting the stage for his authoritarian rule.

The Soviet Union's One-Party State

The narrative begins with Vladimir Lenin in 1917, spearheading the October Revolution. This event followed years of catastrophic involvement in World War I for Russia, the February Revolution in 1917 which deposed the Tsar, and subsequently, the October Revolution where Lenin founded the world's first Marxist state, known as the Russian Soviet Republic.

Marxism, a 19th-century ideology, posited that history evolved through a series of class struggles between those who controlled the means of production and those oppressed by these controllers. According to Marxist theory, the ultimate stage of these struggles would culminate in a working-class revolution, led by the Communist Party, which in Lenin's context was the Bolshevik Party.

From 1917 to 1922, Lenin consolidated his power following a brutal civil war, which concluded with the victory of Lenin's Bolsheviks and the formation of a new state, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In this newly established state, the Soviet government prohibited any political opposition to the Bolshevik Party, which later became known as the Communist Party.

Features of the Early Soviet State

In the nascent Soviet state, the government consisted of two primary bodies: the Council of the People's Commissars and the Secretariat, both exclusively staffed by Bolsheviks. The party itself was governed by the Politburo, which comprised the leaders of the Soviet Communist Party who directed governmental operations. Membership in the party was a prerequisite for holding any government position, from the highest to the local levels. Decision-making within the Soviet state adhered to the principle of **Democratic Centralism**, wherein votes within the Politburo mandated compliance from all party members. Even if a member lost a vote, they were required to accept the outcome and refrain from further opposition.

Lenin's Soviet Union was unequivocally a one-party state, with all other political parties banned. It was a bureaucratic regime, with Lenin exerting control over all levels of government within the Soviet Union, ensuring obedience to the central party. It was also a police state. The initial secret police in the Soviet Union were the Cheka, which later evolved into other entities such as the **OGPU**, the **NKVD**, and the **KGB**. These organizations suppressed any resistance to the government, targeting counter-revolutionaries, and enforced government control over the populace.

Lenin's regime prohibited factionalism, eliminating any criticism of party leadership or free speech. Independent trade unions were destroyed, and political purges and show trials were conducted against any opposition. Public worship was banned, and churches across Russia were either destroyed or repurposed for government use. The state also nationalized private companies and banks, with economic control initially implemented through **War Communism** and later the **New Economic Policy (NEP)**. This period marked a cultural revolution, with the state dictating practices within the Soviet Union. Early

on, it advocated for a global proletariat revolution and developed **Comintern**, the Communist International, to support communist revolutions in other countries.

Stalin's Rise

Joseph Stalin's ascendancy followed the relatively swift demise of Vladimir Lenin. Lenin passed away in January 1924 after a prolonged illness and multiple strokes, leaving no explicit instructions for succession. By 1924, Stalin, already a prominent figure in the government and the Communist Party, began his rise to power. Initially, Stalin held the position of People's Commissar for Nationalities, leveraging his Georgian heritage to garner support from various minority groups within the Soviet Socialist Republics.

As a liaison officer in 1919, Stalin oversaw high-level personnel and policies within the Communist Party. In the same year, he was appointed head of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate, providing him with oversight of all government departments. Additionally, as General Secretary of the Communist Party, Stalin played a central role in party operations and exercised control over upper-level party members. These roles endowed him with the power of patronage, enabling him to populate the ranks with loyal supporters.

Stalin benefited from the substantial expansion of the party during the Lenin Enrollment from 1924 to 1925, which saw the party's membership nearly double from over 300,000 to 600,000 members, many of whom owed their loyalty to Stalin. At Lenin's funeral in early 1924, Stalin further consolidated his future control by delivering the funeral oration, while his primary rival, Leon Trotsky, was notably absent. Trotsky later alleged that Stalin had given him the wrong date for the funeral, thereby embarrassing and discrediting him within the party.

War Communism to the New Economic Policy (NEP)

Lenin's shift from War Communism to the New Economic Policy (NEP) significantly undermined the influence of his ideological rival, Leon Trotsky. During the Russian Civil War, War Communism involved a series of repressive economic measures by the Bolsheviks to centralize control over agriculture and industry in Russia. These measures included government seizure of grain and a prohibition against farmers making a profit. This approach ultimately failed, prompting Lenin to adopt the NEP, a temporary relaxation of government controls, the cessation of grain requisitions, and the allowance of food surpluses to be sold for profit.

Trotsky and the leftists advocated for the abolition of the NEP and favored a more forceful coercion of the peasantry to comply with collectivization rules. Trotsky supported the idea of international Marxism and a permanent revolution, whereas Stalin opposed this, advocating instead for socialism in one country. Consequently, Trotsky was removed from his position as Commissar for War in 1925, lost other key positions, was expelled from the Politburo and the Central Committee, exiled from the Soviet Union in 1927, and ultimately assassinated by the secret police (**NKVD**) in 1940 in Mexico.

Stalin's Defeat of the Left and Right

After Leon Trotsky and the leftists were defeated, Stalin directed his attention towards his rivals on the political right, who advocated for a more gradual revolution and the continuation of the **New Economic Policy (NEP)**. Initially, these rightists had supported Stalin against Trotsky. However, once Trotsky was eliminated, Stalin adopted more stringent policies from the left, calling for collectivization and nationalization starting in 1928. Stalin justified these policies by claiming they were essential due to threats from both inside and outside the Soviet Union, necessitating a more assertive approach towards the peasantry. The rightists within the party were left with minimal power, allowing Stalin to exercise complete control with no internal opposition.

Chapter 3 - Establishment of Stalin's Regime

Key Points

1. **Stalin's Economic Aims and Policies:**

- a. Stalin aimed to rapidly modernize the Soviet economy and establish complete government control.
- b. He called this transformation the "Second Revolution in Russia," positioning himself as a revolutionary leader akin to Lenin.
- c. The revolution had two main components: collectivization of agriculture and rapid industrialization.

2. **Collectivization:**

- a. Collectivization involved merging numerous private farms into large, state-controlled collectives.
- b. Stalin argued that this would increase agricultural efficiency, allowing for the use of industrial machinery and producing surplus grain for international sale to fund industrialization.
- c. Surplus labor from agriculture would be redirected to the industrial sector.

3. **Targeting of the Kulaks:**

- a. Wealthier peasants, known as kulaks, were targeted during collectivization.
- b. Kulaks were accused of hoarding produce to inflate prices.
- c. A national policy of dekulakization led to the arrest, deportation, and execution of many kulaks, with over 2 million exiled to Siberian labor camps.

4. **Resistance to Collectivization:**

- a. There was significant resistance to collectivization, with peasants engaging in acts of defiance such as arson and destroying food stores.
- b. Despite rural protests, the threat of violence and deportation eventually quelled much resistance.
- c. The state's harsh measures, including secret police actions, enforced compliance.

5. **Consequences of Collectivization:**

- a. Collectivization led to a severe famine in the early 1930s, particularly devastating in Ukraine, known as the Holodomor, which caused millions of deaths.
 - b. Mass internal migrations, many forced by the government, occurred.
 - c. The state-controlled media to hide the catastrophic outcomes.
 - d. Despite the human cost, a workforce was created for industrialization.
- 6. Industrialization:**
- a. Stalin promoted a "war economy," focusing on developing iron, steel, and oil industries to defend the state.
 - b. Industrialization was implemented through a series of Five-Year Plans with ambitious production targets for heavy industries.
- 7. Effects of the Five-Year Plans:**
- a. The First Five-Year Plan began in 1928, followed by subsequent plans, except during WWII.
 - b. The plans led to significant increases in industrial output, particularly in coal, iron, and electricity, but less so in steel and chemicals.
 - c. Emphasis on heavy industry resulted in a decline in textile production and consumer goods.
 - d. There were many inefficiencies, with some sectors overproducing and others underproducing.
 - e. Living standards remained low, often worse than before the plans, highlighting the plans' shortcomings in addressing basic needs.

Overview

Chapter 3 focuses on the establishment of Joseph Stalin's regime in the Soviet Union, detailing his economic policies and their impacts. Stalin aimed to modernize the Soviet economy through collectivization of agriculture and rapid industrialization. Collectivization targeted wealthier peasants (kulaks) and led to widespread resistance, famine, and significant human suffering, particularly in Ukraine. Despite these costs, it created a

workforce for industrialization. Stalin's industrialization efforts were implemented through the Five-Year Plans, emphasizing heavy industry but resulting in inefficiencies and low living standards. The chapter underscores Stalin's ruthless methods and the profound consequences of his policies.

Stalin's Economic Aims and Policies

Stalin aspired to rapidly modernize the Soviet economy and establish a fully government-controlled economy within the Soviet Union. He termed this transformation the "Second Revolution in Russia," aligning himself with Vladimir Lenin as a revolutionary leader. Stalin's revolution comprised two principal components: the collectivization of agriculture, which aimed to abolish private ownership of agricultural land, and the pursuit of rapid industrialization to transform the Soviet Union into a contemporary industrialized state.

Collectivization

Collectivization entailed merging numerous private farms, typically ranging from 50 to 100, into larger state-controlled collectives. Stalin contended that this approach would enhance the efficiency of Soviet agriculture, enabling the use of industrial agricultural machinery that smaller private plots could not afford. The surplus grains produced on these collective farms were intended for sale in international markets, generating capital necessary for industrialization. Additionally, surplus labor from the agricultural sector could be redirected to contribute to the burgeoning industrial workforce.

Targeting of the Kulaks

The process of collectivization also specifically targeted the kulaks, who were wealthier peasants owning land. They were accused of hoarding production to artificially inflate prices for personal gain. Stalin instituted a national policy of **dekulakization**, wherein poorer peasants participated in government-sanctioned assaults against the kulaks. The **OGPU**, or secret police, arrested and deported hundreds of thousands of kulaks, with over 30,000 being executed and more than 2 million being exiled to Siberian gulags and labor camps.

Resistance

Resistance to collectivization was significant, with millions of peasants engaging in acts of defiance, such as arson and the destruction of food stores confiscated by the government. Rural protests erupted, but the threat of violence and deportation ultimately quelled much of this resistance. The state's harsh measures, including the use of the secret police and the policy of **dekulakization**, served to suppress opposition and enforce compliance with collectivization policies.

Consequences of Collectivization

The consequences of collectivization were catastrophic. The Soviet Union endured a severe famine in the early 1930s, resulting in millions of deaths. This famine was particularly devastating in Ukraine, where government confiscation of agricultural production led to the **Holodomor**, causing the deaths of approximately 3 to 5 million Ukrainians. Mass internal migrations occurred, many of which were forced by the government. The state controlled the media to conceal the dire outcomes of forced collectivization. Despite these tragedies, a workforce was created

for industrialization, facilitating the next phase of Stalin's economic objectives.

Industrialization

Stalin advocated for the establishment of what he termed a war economy, positing that the state was engaged in a battle against Russia's agrarian heritage and capitalist adversaries. The development of the iron, steel, and oil industries was deemed essential for defending the state against its enemies. Soviet industrialization materialized through a series of **Five-Year Plans**, which set ambitious production targets for steel, iron, and coal, despite lacking specific methods to achieve these objectives.

Effects of the Five-Year Plans

The First Five-Year Plan commenced in 1928, with subsequent plans following, except during World War II. The outcomes of these plans were varied. The initial plan led to a marked increase in industrial output, especially in coal, iron, and electricity production, though gains in steel and chemicals were less pronounced. The focus on heavy industry resulted in a decline in the production of textiles.

These plans generated numerous inefficiencies, with some sectors overproducing while others underproduced, disrupting supply chains and exacerbating hoarding issues. Emphasis on quantity over quality led to subpar standards in production.

While heavy industrial production surged, the living standards in the Soviet Union remained low, often deteriorating compared to pre-Five-Year Plan conditions. Consumer goods were scarce, highlighting the plans' shortcomings in addressing the populace's basic needs.

Chapter 4 - Opposition to Stalin & the Purges

Key Points

1. **Stalin's Purges:**

- a. Stalin used purges extensively in the 1930s to eliminate political opponents.
- b. Public show trials were conducted with predetermined outcomes, serving as propaganda tools to enforce compliance and reinforce Stalin's absolute authority.
- c. Initially focused on expelling political adversaries from the Communist Party, the purges escalated to deportations and executions.

2. **Consolidation of Police Power:**

- a. In 1933-1934, Stalin consolidated police power within the Soviet Union.
- b. Civilian police, labor camps (gulags), and border guards came under the control of the NKVD, the primary state security agency.

3. **The Kirov Assassination:**

- a. The assassination of Sergey Kirov in 1934 triggered significant purges.
- b. Show trials and executions followed, with 3,000 suspected conspirators arrested and many executed or deported.
- c. Stalin used the event to eliminate potential threats and fill positions with loyalists.

4. **Terror in the Party:**

- a. The Kirov assassination intensified internal purges within the Communist Party.
- b. By 1937, over half of the 1934 Communist Party Congress delegates had been executed.
- c. The party's ranks were filled with political opportunists and Stalin loyalists, further consolidating his control.

5. **The Great Terror (1936-1939):**

- a. Political violence escalated during the Great Terror.

- b. Thousands of show trials were conducted, with military and party leaders accused of being enemies of the state.
 - c. Many political adversaries were labeled Trotskyites and executed.
- 6. **Purge of the Party:**
 - a. The Communist Party saw extensive purges, with leaders accused of espionage, sabotage, and conspiracy.
 - b. Confessions were extracted under torture, and show trials were used to justify the purges.
- 7. **Purge of the Military:**
 - a. In 1937, the purges extended to the Soviet military.
 - b. Allegations of a conspiracy with Germany and Japan led to the execution of numerous Soviet generals.
 - c. The military was left undermanned and poorly led, impacting its preparedness for WWII.
- 8. **Purge of the People:**
 - a. The purges extended to the general populace.
 - b. Failure to meet five-year plan goals could lead to deportation or execution.
 - c. Millions were imprisoned in the expanded gulag system, fostering a pervasive culture of fear.
 - d. Minority regions were targeted to eliminate nationalist sentiments.
- 9. **Later Purges:**
 - a. Purges continued after WWII.
 - b. The Leningrad Affair in 1949 and the Doctor's Plot in 1953 targeted party members and hospital workers, respectively.
 - c. Stalin's death in 1953 prevented a full-scale purge of Jews in Moscow.

Overview

Chapter 4 focuses on Stalin's extensive use of purges to eliminate opposition and consolidate power within the Soviet Union. The purges, marked by public show trials and executions, began with political adversaries in the Communist Party and extended to the

general populace and military. The consolidation of police power under the NKVD facilitated these purges. Significant events such as the Kirov assassination and the Great Terror intensified the purges, resulting in widespread arrests, executions, and a culture of fear. The later purges continued Stalin's efforts to eliminate perceived threats until his death in 1953. Through these purges, Stalin secured his absolute authority over the Soviet Union.

The establishment of a propaganda state

Under Stalin's leadership, all artists and writers were compelled by the state to align their work with state ideology. Creators were mandated to adhere to the official artistic style of the Soviet Union, known as socialist realism. This style promoted positive portrayals of communist values, the liberation of the proletariat class, an idealized vision of the Soviet government, and the glorification of Joseph Stalin. Non-compliance with this style often led to purges.

Authors, poets, and writers in the Soviet Union were coerced into joining the Soviet Union of Writers, an organization established in 1934, which held dominion over all published works within the nation. Membership was obligatory for publication, and the government exercised oversight and censorship over all media, directing the views of the public throughout the Soviet Union during Stalin's rule.

Stalin's Purges

During Joseph Stalin's regime, opposition within the Soviet Union was significantly diminished due to his extensive use of purges. Stalin's consolidation of power was marked by a decade of purges in the 1930s aimed at eliminating political opponents. Public show trials were conducted with predetermined outcomes, serving as potent propaganda tools to ensure compliance and reinforce Stalin's absolute authority.

Initially, the purges focused on expelling political adversaries from the Communist Party, thereby stripping them of any governmental influence. Over time, Stalin's escalating paranoia regarding potential threats to his power led to deportations and ultimately to executions.

Consolidation of Police Power

This period marked the consolidation of police power within the Soviet Union, centralizing state law enforcement. Beginning in 1933 and 1934, civilian police, labor and detention camps (known as gulags), and border guards all came under the control of a single central state organization, the new **NKVD**, which succeeded the **OGPU** and became the Soviet Union's primary state security agency.

The Kirov Assassination

The significant purges commenced after the 1934 assassination of Politburo member Sergey Kirov in Leningrad. The murder, which occurred under mysterious circumstances, instigated a series of show trials and executions of individuals accused of either being involved in the assassination or failing to protect Kirov. In total, 3,000 suspected conspirators were arrested, tried, and ultimately faced imprisonment or execution. Additionally, thousands were deported from Leningrad. Stalin utilized this event to purge potential threats, filling the vacant positions with his loyalists, thereby securing complete control over the Soviet state bureaucracy.

Terror in the Party

The consequences of the Kirov assassination intensified internal purges within the Communist Party. By 1937, over half of the nearly 2,000 delegates who had attended the 1934 Communist

Party Congress in Moscow had been executed. Joseph Stalin consolidated his authority over the party, which controlled the state. The party's ranks swelled with political opportunists and loyalists to Stalin, particularly during the Stalin enrollment. These new members, who supported the purges, often received promotions and higher positions within the party, further entrenching Stalin's control.

The Great Terror

From 1936 to 1939, political violence in the Soviet Union escalated significantly during what is known as the Great Terror. Stalin perceived an ongoing battle against his enemies, both domestic and international, which fueled widespread state-sponsored violence. Thousands of show trials were conducted, with military and party leaders accused of being enemies of the state. Political adversaries were often labeled as Trotskyites, deemed in need of elimination.

Purge of the Party

The purge of the Communist Party ensued, featuring show trials and executions of numerous party leaders accused of espionage, sabotaging the Soviet state, and conspiring to assassinate Stalin. Under extreme mental and physical torture, most ultimately confessed to these charges, and all were declared guilty. For Stalin, these show trials and public confessions of guilt served as evidence supporting his claim of an internal war against the state, thereby consolidating his authority.

Purge of the Military

In 1937, the purges extended to the Soviet military. Stalin perceived the Red Army, formerly under Leon Trotsky's command, as a significant threat. Allegations of a conspiracy involving

military officers collaborating with Germany and Japan were exposed in show trials, leading to the execution of numerous Soviet generals. Within a few months, all political war commissars were dismissed, and three out of the five marshals of the Soviet Union were purged. Nearly all army commanders and two-thirds of divisional commanders were removed from their positions. During this purge, approximately 35,000 Soviet officers were either imprisoned or executed. The navy and air force experienced similar purges, resulting in the Soviet military being left undermanned, inexperienced, poorly led, and ill-prepared for the impending Second World War.

Purge of the People

The purges also extended to the general populace. Failure to meet the ambitious goals set by the five-year plans could lead to the deportation or execution of workers and their families. Both workers and managers were frequently accused of industrial sabotage. Consequently, the extensive gulag system expanded to accommodate millions of prisoners. Ultimately, one in eight Soviet citizens faced arrest during the purges, fostering a pervasive culture of fear within the state as neighbors turned on neighbors. Additionally, minority regions beyond Russia were targeted to eliminate nationalist sentiments.

Later Purges

Following the Second World War, purges persisted within the Soviet Union. The Politburo and Central Committee of the Communist Party were disbanded in 1947. The Leningrad Affair in 1949 led to the purging of party members in Leningrad, following accusations that the city was being utilized as a base of operations against Stalin. In 1953, the supposed Doctor's Plot involved accusations against hospital workers, many of them Jewish, who were allegedly planning Stalin's assassination. This event highlighted both Stalin's purges and the anti-Semitism within the Soviet state. However, Stalin's death in 1953 prevented a full-scale purge of Jews in Moscow, as his successors declared the plot a fabrication.

Throughout Stalin's regime in the 1930s and 1940s, these purges resulted in the elimination of both real and perceived opposition, thereby ensuring Stalin's absolute authority.

Chapter 5 - Aims and Policies of Stalin's Regime

Key Points

1. **Cult of Personality:**

- a. Stalin established a cult of personality through extensive propaganda, depicting himself as an infallible, idealized, and heroic leader.
- b. His image was omnipresent in public and private spaces, and Soviet achievements were attributed solely to him, while failures were blamed on saboteurs and enemies of the state.

2. **Cult of Youth:**

- a. The Komsomol, or All-Union Leninist Young Communist League, was formed to foster loyalty among youth aged 14 to 28.
- b. Younger children participated in precursor organizations such as the Young Octoberists and Young Pioneers.
- c. By 1940, the Komsomol had over 10 million members, reflecting its vast influence.

3. **Social Policies:**

- a. Propaganda efforts suppressed opposition movements, especially in non-Russian Soviet Socialist Republics.
- b. Stalin promoted Russian cultural dominance and used famines, purges, and mass deportations to suppress minority groups, resulting in millions of deaths.

4. **Religion:**

- a. Stalin's regime suppressed religion, aligning with communist atheism.
- b. Aggressive campaigns closed houses of worship, and thousands of clerics were deported or executed.
- c. Despite a slight relaxation during WWII, religion remained under strict state control.

5. **Education:**

- a. Stalin established compulsory education for children aged 5 to 15, with extended years for the elite.
 - b. The state-prescribed curriculum focused on core subjects and Marxist theory to create a loyal and ideologically uniform populace.
6. **Women:**
- a. Stalin reversed Lenin's policies on women's liberation, emphasizing the family as a stabilizing force.
 - b. The 1936 Soviet Constitution proclaimed gender equality, but restrictions on divorce and abortion were imposed.
 - c. Women faced the "double burden" of household responsibilities and workforce participation, with increased labor demands during WWII.
7. **Extent of Stalin's Authoritarianism:**
- a. Stalin exercised absolute control over the state bureaucracy, transforming the Soviet Union into an authoritarian one-party state.
 - b. Show trials, purges, a command economy, and a cult of personality ensured his dominance.
 - c. State censorship and control over media enforced ideological conformity.

Overview

Chapter 5 focuses on the aims and policies of Stalin's regime, highlighting his establishment of a cult of personality through propaganda and control over youth organizations like the Komsomol. Social policies promoted Russian dominance and suppressed minority groups through famines, purges, and deportations. Religion was heavily suppressed, with a slight relaxation during WWII. Stalin's education policies aimed to create a loyal, ideologically uniform populace, while his policies on women emphasized traditional family roles, reversing Lenin's earlier reforms. Stalin's authoritarianism was marked by absolute control over the state, enforced through purges, show trials, and a

command economy, ensuring complete ideological conformity within the Soviet Union.

Cult of Personality

This contributed to the formation of Joseph Stalin's cult of personality, wherein he utilized propaganda to establish himself as the infallible leader of the state, depicted as an idealized and heroic figure. Within a cult of personality, the leader commands unquestioning loyalty and adulation. Stalin, in particular, became synonymous with the concept of the Soviet state. Throughout the Soviet Union, both in public spaces and private homes, images of Joseph Stalin were ubiquitous. His portraits were omnipresent. Stalin's perceived greatness was emphasized across all media, with all Soviet achievements during his tenure attributed solely to him, while all failures were blamed on saboteurs and enemies of the state.

Cult of Youth

To support the cult of personality, the Komsomol, or All-Union Leninist Young Communist League, was established. This organization, encompassing youth aged 14 to 28, became the Soviet youth movement, fostering a generation of communists dedicated to the Soviet state. The Komsomol played a significant role in parades and celebrations and prepared its members for future roles in the Communist Party. Younger children participated in precursor organizations, such as the Young Octoberists for those under nine years old and the Young Pioneers for those under 14. By 1940, at the onset of the Second World War, the Komsomol had over 10 million members, reflecting its vast influence and reach.

Social Policies

Joseph Stalin directed significant propaganda efforts to suppress potential opposition movements, particularly in the Soviet Socialist Republics outside of Russia. Although Stalin was Georgian, he promoted Russian state and cultural dominance within the Soviet Union, fearing that nationalist sentiments could undermine his rule and challenge his authority. The famines and purges of the 1930s became tools for suppressing minority groups. Mass deportations occurred, especially in the 1940s, relocating Russians from Western Russia along the Second World War conflict borders to Siberian regions in the East. These deportations, which included Ukrainians and Chechens following Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union, resulted in millions of deaths.

Religion

Religion faced significant suppression in the Soviet Union under Stalin. Communist ideology was inherently atheist, aligning with Karl Marx's assertion in the 1840s that religion was the “opiate of the masses.” Following Lenin's precedent, Stalin aimed to sever Russia's strong ties to the Christian Orthodox Church. Beginning in 1928, an aggressive campaign sought to close all houses of worship, including churches and mosques. Many churches were vandalized or destroyed, repurposed as government buildings or theaters. Thousands of clerics and priests faced deportation for resisting these measures.

Rural resistance to these anti-religious policies was particularly robust, given the deep-seated religious beliefs in these areas. Property was confiscated, and millions of people were deported. By 1940, only 500 churches remained open throughout the Soviet Union, representing merely one percent of the pre-revolutionary numbers before 1917. This small number of remaining churches allowed Stalin to claim a semblance of

religious freedom within the Soviet Union. Through his cult of personality, Stalin himself became the new quasi-religious icon for the Soviet people.

World War II brought a slight relaxation of religious persecution. Some churches were permitted to reopen, and priests were released to provide spiritual support for the war effort. Despite this temporary reprieve, the church remained firmly under state control.

Education

Joseph Stalin sought to assert comprehensive control over education in the Soviet Union to modernize the state effectively. He established compulsory education for children aged 5 to 15, with additional optional years for those seeking to join the professional class of the educated elite. This extended education was primarily accessible to party members and government officials who could afford the fees, thus ensuring that the party hierarchy consisted of the *nomenklatura*, the elites who managed the party and government.

In Soviet schools, the curriculum and textbooks were state-prescribed, emphasizing core subjects such as reading, writing, science, mathematics, history, the Russian language (particularly in minority republic states), and Marxist theory. This education system aimed to inculcate the values and knowledge deemed essential by the state, aligning with Stalin's broader objectives of creating a loyal and ideologically uniform populace.

Women

Women in the Soviet Union underwent significant changes. Under the early Soviet regime, Vladimir Lenin aimed to liberate women from traditional roles. He facilitated easier access to divorce and workforce participation for women, intending to free them from what he deemed the bourgeois institution of marriage and

childbearing. However, Joseph Stalin reversed these trends during the period known as the Great Retreat. As birth rates declined and divorce rates soared, Stalin emphasized the family as a stabilizing force in the Soviet Union.

In 1936, the new Soviet Constitution proclaimed the complete equality of women and men, although this idealism did not reflect the reality of women's lives in the Soviet Union. Divorces became more difficult to obtain, the rights to abortion, which had been expanded under Lenin, were significantly restricted, and homosexuality was outlawed. Despite these social restrictions, women's participation in the workforce increased dramatically, growing over fivefold from 1928 to 1945.

Double Burden

During the Second World War, amidst persistently declining birth rates, Stalin intensified efforts to direct women towards family responsibilities. Additional restrictions were imposed on women regarding divorce, and abortion was entirely outlawed. Mothers with more than two children were celebrated as heroines of the Soviet Union, while families with fewer than two children faced increased taxation.

Women in the Soviet Union often experienced the "double burden" of managing primary household responsibilities while also participating in the workforce. This reality was exacerbated during the war as the demand for labor in factories grew while many men were away fighting. Over half a million women served in combat roles within the Soviet armed forces, and by 1945, women constituted half of the Soviet workforce.

Extent of Stalin's Authoritarianism

To what extent did Stalin's authoritarianism reach? He exercised absolute control over the state bureaucracy. The Soviet Union was transformed into an authoritarian one-party state with no successful opposition. This dominance was secured through the terror state fostered by **show trials** and purges throughout the 1930s. A command economy was implemented, as the Soviet Union collectivized agriculture and advanced towards a state-directed industrialist system led by five-year plans. Stalin's **cult of personality** established a propaganda machine where he was exclusively praised and never criticized. Ideologies outside the Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist framework were prohibited, and state censorship and media control ensured complete ideological conformity.

Chapter 6 - Stalin's Foreign Policy

Key Points

1. **Early Ambitions of the Bolshevik Revolution:**
 - a. The Bolshevik Revolution aimed for a global Communist Revolution, initially supported by Lenin and Trotsky.
 - b. The Communist International (Comintern) was established in 1919 to promote global communism, but shifted focus to defending the Soviet Union after Lenin's death.
2. **Soviet Union and Nazi Germany:**
 - a. The relationship deteriorated after Hitler rose to power in 1933.
 - b. Nazi anti-communist propaganda and territorial ambitions in Eastern Europe strained relations further.
3. **Foreign Policy through 1939:**
 - a. The Soviet Union joined the League of Nations in 1934 and signed defensive treaties with France and Czechoslovakia in 1935.
 - b. These treaties were largely symbolic and lacked enforcement due to reliance on British support and League of Nations approval.
4. **Anti-Comintern Pact:**
 - a. In 1936, Germany, Italy, and Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact, threatening the Soviet Union with a potential two-front war.
 - b. Stalin sought allies but faced difficulties due to the Great Purge and entrenched anti-communist sentiments in the West.
5. **Munich Pact:**
 - a. The Munich Pact in 1938, which ceded the Sudetenland to Germany, excluded the Soviet Union and heightened Stalin's security concerns.
 - b. Stalin viewed the pact as an anti-Soviet move by Western powers.
6. **Nazi-Soviet Pact:**
 - a. In August 1939, Stalin signed the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact with Germany, allowing Soviet territorial expansion in Eastern Europe.
 - b. This secret protocol partitioned Poland and granted the Soviet Union control over the Baltic states and Finland.

7. World War II:
 - a. The Soviet Union reclaimed lost territories but faced setbacks in the Soviet-Finnish Winter War of 1939-1940.
 - b. Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 caught Stalin off guard.
 - c. Despite initial setbacks, the Soviet Union achieved significant victories, including the defense of Stalingrad and the capture of Berlin.
8. **Aftermath of WWII:**
 - a. Soviet victory strengthened Stalin's position, leading to the establishment of a satellite empire in Eastern Europe.
 - b. Pro-Soviet governments were installed in Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Czechoslovakia, providing a buffer against Western threats.
9. **Early Cold War:**
 - a. Stalin's foreign policy influenced early Cold War tensions, with the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe and the division of Germany.
 - b. The nuclear arms race began with the Soviet Union's development of a nuclear weapon in 1949.
 - c. Stalin supported the People's Republic of China and North Korea's invasion of South Korea in 1950.

Overview

Chapter 6 focuses on Joseph Stalin's foreign policy, highlighting his strategic maneuvers to secure and expand Soviet influence. Initially, the Bolshevik Revolution aimed for global communism, but Stalin shifted focus to socialism in one country. Relations with Nazi Germany deteriorated, leading to the Nazi-Soviet Pact, which allowed Soviet territorial expansion. During WWII, the Soviet Union faced significant challenges but emerged victorious, establishing a satellite empire in Eastern Europe. Stalin's foreign policy during the early Cold War included supporting China's communist government and North Korea's invasion of South Korea, solidifying his legacy as a dominant and influential leader in Soviet and global history.

Introduction

Beginning with the establishment of the Soviet Union in 1922 and the creation of **Comintern**, we observe the early ambitions of the Bolshevik Revolution, which extended beyond a Communist Revolution in Russia to a global Communist Revolution. This vision was initially championed by Lenin and Leon Trotsky. The **Communist International (Comintern)** was founded in 1919 during the Russian Civil War with the objective of promoting a global Communist Revolution. Comintern provided Soviet support for early revolutionary movements in Europe following the First World War, though none of these endeavors achieved lasting success. Following Lenin's death, Joseph Stalin shifted the focus towards supporting **socialism in one country**, leading to an adjustment in Comintern's goals to prioritize defending the Soviet Union from external threats.

The USSR and Nazi Germany

The relationship between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany experienced significant shifts due to changes in the political landscape. With Adolf Hitler's rise to power in 1933, the previously established relationship between the Soviet Union and Germany, dating back to the **Treaty of Rapallo** in 1922, began to deteriorate. The Nazis targeted the Communist Party in Germany, and Nazi anti-communist propaganda further strained relations between the two nations. Additionally, German leaders' aspirations to acquire territory in Eastern Europe, which included parts of the Soviet Union, made it impossible to maintain the preexisting relationship.

Foreign Policy Through 1939

Soviet foreign policy through 1939 was shaped by Stalin's concerns for security amidst the growing threat posed by Germany. The Soviet Union joined the **League of Nations** in 1934 and forged treaty agreements with nations such as France and Czechoslovakia in 1935, establishing defensive alliances in the event of an attack, particularly from Germany. However, these agreements were largely symbolic and lacked substantive enforcement, as they were contingent upon British support and the approval of the League of Nations for any military action.

The Anti-Comintern Pact

In 1936, Germany, Italy, and Japan formalized the **Anti-Comintern Pact**, which posed a significant threat to the Soviet Union by creating the potential for a two-front war, with Germany on the western front and Japan on the eastern front. In response, finding allies became a priority for Joseph Stalin in the subsequent years. However, the intensifying **Great Purge** from 1936 to 1938 complicated efforts to secure support from Western powers, whose anti-Bolshevik and anti-communist sentiments were deeply entrenched.

The Munich Pact

In October 1938, the Munich Conference, culminating in the **Munich Pact**, heightened Joseph Stalin's concerns regarding Soviet security against foreign threats. This agreement, endorsed by the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Germany, ceded the western Czechoslovakian region of the Sudetenland to Germany in an attempt to preserve peace in Europe. The Soviet Union was excluded from this conference, leading Stalin to perceive the pact as an anti-Soviet move and indicative of a coalition of Western states aligned against Soviet interests.

The Nazi-Soviet Pact

After being rebuffed by Western powers, Joseph Stalin pursued an agreement with Nazi Germany in August 1939. The **Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact**, also known as the **Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact**, stipulated non-aggression between Germany and the Soviet Union. This accord also included a secret protocol that permitted the Soviet Union to expand its borders westward, effectively partitioning Poland between Germany and the Soviet Union, and granting the Soviet Union control over the Baltic states and Finland. This arrangement enabled the Soviet Union to reclaim territories lost during the First World War.

World War II

From 1939 to 1941, the onset of World War II allowed the Soviet Union to reclaim previously held territories. However, the Soviet-Finnish Winter War of 1939-1940 proved disastrous for the Soviet Union, as Finnish resistance was formidable. The purges of the Soviet military, during which 35,000 officers were executed, left the remaining officers inexperienced or hesitant to report challenges to their superiors, and certainly not to Stalin. Despite achieving a Pyrrhic victory, the conflict revealed significant weaknesses in the Soviet military.

In June 1941, Adolf Hitler, against the advice of some of his generals who believed the German army was not yet prepared for a major eastern offensive, invaded the Soviet Union. Due to his agreements with Nazi Germany, Stalin was caught off guard by this invasion. The initial setbacks in 1941 and 1942 were followed by costly victories, notably the defense of Stalingrad and ultimately the capture of Berlin, the Nazi capital. Throughout the war, Soviet propaganda depicted Joseph Stalin as the heroic national leader who guided his country to victory in what was termed the Great Patriotic War.

Aftermath of WWII

Following World War II, the Soviet victory over Germany significantly strengthened Stalin's position. The Grand Alliance, comprising the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union under Stalin, positioned him as a key figure in shaping post-war foreign policy. Stalin leveraged this political capital to enhance Soviet security in the post-war era.

From 1945 to 1948, the Soviet Union established a satellite empire in Eastern Europe, ensuring pro-Soviet governments controlled states such as Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Czechoslovakia. These satellite states served as a buffer against potential threats from Germany and other Western powers perceived by Stalin as adversaries. Additionally, these states provided essential material aid and food resources to the Soviet Union, which was in dire need following the devastation of World War II.

The Early Cold War

During the early years of the Cold War, Joseph Stalin's foreign policy significantly influenced the evolving conflict with Western powers and the United States. The establishment of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe, the division of Germany into East and West, and the initiation of a nuclear arms race following the Soviet Union's development of a nuclear weapon in 1949 to counter the United States' arsenal marked key developments. Additionally, Stalin maintained a supportive but cautious stance towards the newly established People's Republic of China, led by Mao Zedong, after the communist triumph in the Chinese Civil War in 1949.

Stalin also endorsed Kim Il-sung's invasion of South Korea by North Korean forces in 1950, a conflict that persisted until Stalin's death in 1953. These actions exemplified the aggressive

and expansionist nature of Stalin's foreign policy during this period, further solidifying his position as a dominant leader within the Soviet Union and intensifying the geopolitical tensions of the Cold War.

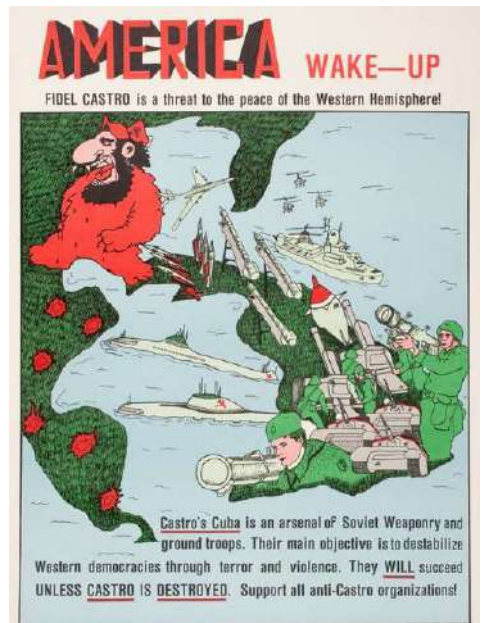
Stalin's foreign policy maneuvers during these years cemented his authority at home, ensuring his legacy as a pivotal figure in Soviet and global history.

Castro's Cuba



Translation: "That flag, that sky, this land, we will defend it at whatever price may be necessary", Cuba, 1969

An American propaganda poster commissioned by an unknown conservative group. 1970.



Historiographical Viewpoints: Interpretations of the Authoritarian State of Fidel Castro

Common Historiographical Schools of Thought

Interpretation of the Political School of History

The Political School of history interprets Castro's Communist Cuba by focusing on the political structures, governance, and leadership that defined the regime. This perspective emphasizes Fidel Castro's central role in establishing a one-party state, consolidating power, and implementing socialist policies. It examines the mechanisms of political control, such as the suppression of dissent, the establishment of the Cuban Communist Party as the only legal political entity, and the extensive use of state propaganda and censorship. The Political School also explores Cuba's foreign policy under Castro, including its alliances with the Soviet Union and support for revolutionary movements abroad, and the impact of the U.S. embargo and Cold War dynamics on the island's governance.

"Under Fidel Castro, Cuba became a tightly controlled, one-party state where the Communist Party of Cuba held a monopoly on political power, suppressing any form of opposition and dissent."

Sweig, Julia E. *Inside the Cuban Revolution: Fidel Castro and the Urban Underground*. Harvard UP, 2002.

Criticism of the Political Historical View

Critics of the Political School's approach argue that it can sometimes overly focus on the authoritarian aspects of Castro's rule, potentially neglecting the broader social, economic, and

cultural contexts that shaped and were shaped by the Cuban Revolution. They contend that this perspective may underplay the significant social programs implemented under Castro, such as healthcare and education reforms, which had a profound impact on Cuban society. Additionally, critics suggest that the Political School might overlook the nuances of popular support and resistance, as well as the complexities of Cuba's international relations beyond the Cold War binary.

"While it is crucial to acknowledge the authoritarian nature of Castro's regime, focusing solely on political repression risks ignoring the substantial social reforms and the complex motivations behind Cuban support for the revolution."

Pérez, Louis A. *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*. Oxford UP, 1995.

Interpretation of the Economic School of History

The Economic School of history interprets Castro's Communist Cuba primarily through the lens of economic policies, practices, and outcomes. This perspective focuses on the centralization of the economy under state control, the implementation of socialist economic policies, and the challenges and transformations that accompanied these changes. It examines the nationalization of industries, the establishment of collectivized agriculture, and the state's efforts to reduce inequality and provide social services like education and healthcare. The Economic School also explores Cuba's economic relationship with the Soviet Union, the impact of the U.S. embargo, and the economic crisis that followed the collapse of the Soviet bloc.

"The Cuban economy under Castro was marked by a shift towards a centrally planned model, heavily dependent on

Soviet subsidies, which allowed for significant social achievements but also led to economic inefficiencies and a lack of diversification."

Mesa-Lago, Carmelo. *Cuba's Aborted Reform: Socioeconomic Effects, International Comparisons, and Transition Policies*. University Press of Florida, 2005.

Criticism of the Economic Historical View

Critics of the Economic School's approach argue that it can sometimes overemphasize the role of economic factors and policies, potentially neglecting the broader political, social, and cultural dimensions of the Cuban state. They contend that this perspective may underplay the ideological motivations behind Cuba's economic policies and the regime's efforts to achieve social justice and equity. Additionally, critics suggest that focusing too narrowly on economic outcomes might overlook the resilience and adaptability of the Cuban economy, particularly in response to external pressures like the U.S. embargo and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

"While the economic analysis of Cuba under Castro is crucial, it often fails to account for the broader ideological and social goals that guided economic policy, as well as the significant achievements in healthcare and education despite economic challenges."

Pérez-Stable, Marifeli. *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course, and Legacy*. Oxford UP, 1999.

Interpretation of the Social School of History

The Social School of history interprets Castro's Communist Cuba by focusing on the experiences, behaviors, and transformations within Cuban society under the regime. This perspective emphasizes the social changes brought about by the revolution,

including improvements in healthcare, education, and social equity. It examines how these policies impacted different segments of the population, such as women, racial minorities, and rural communities. The Social School also explores the role of propaganda, political indoctrination, and the creation of a new Cuban identity aligned with socialist ideals. Additionally, it investigates the daily lives of ordinary Cubans, the social controls imposed by the state, and the ways in which people adapted to or resisted these changes.

"The Cuban Revolution brought significant social transformations, particularly in healthcare and education, fundamentally altering the landscape of Cuban society and aiming to create a more egalitarian social order."

Feinberg, Richard E. *Open for Business: Building the New Cuban Economy*. Brookings Institution Press, 2016.

Criticism of the Social Historical View

Critics of the Social School's approach argue that it can sometimes idealize the social achievements of the Cuban state while downplaying issues such as political repression, lack of personal freedoms, and economic hardships. They contend that this perspective may not fully address the limitations and failures of social policies, including the suppression of dissent and the challenges faced by those marginalized or critical of the regime. Additionally, critics suggest that focusing heavily on social aspects might overlook the broader political and economic context that shaped and constrained social policy implementation.

"While the social gains of the Cuban Revolution are often highlighted, it is essential to critically examine the state's authoritarian control and the suppression of civil liberties, which complicate the narrative of social progress."

Interpretation of the Cultural School of History

The Cultural School of history interprets Castro's Communist Cuba by focusing on the cultural policies, artistic expressions, and identity formation under the regime. This perspective examines how the Cuban government used culture as a tool for political and ideological purposes, promoting socialist values and Cuban nationalism. It looks at the state's role in controlling and guiding cultural production, including literature, music, film, and art, as well as the efforts to create a unified national identity aligned with revolutionary ideals. The Cultural School also explores how cultural policies influenced everyday life, from censorship and propaganda to the celebration of Cuban traditions and the promotion of new cultural forms that reflected the revolution's goals.

"Cuba's revolutionary government leveraged culture as a crucial element of its political project, using artistic and cultural expressions to foster a collective identity and propagate socialist ideals."

Whitney, Robert. *State and Revolution in Cuba: Mass Mobilization and Political Change, 1920-1940*. University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

Criticism of the Cultural Historical View

Critics of the Cultural School's approach argue that it can sometimes overemphasize the role of cultural policies and artistic expressions, potentially overlooking the broader socio-political and economic contexts. They contend that this perspective may not fully address the limitations and controls imposed on cultural production, including censorship,

persecution of dissenting artists, and the state's manipulation of culture for propaganda purposes. Additionally, critics suggest that focusing on cultural achievements and innovations might underplay the human rights abuses and the lack of freedom of expression experienced under the regime.

"While the revolutionary government's promotion of culture is notable, it is crucial to recognize the restrictive environment in which artists operated, where creative freedom was often curtailed in favor of ideological conformity."

Menéndez, Lillian Guerra. *Visions of Power in Cuba: Revolution, Redemption, and Resistance, 1959–1971*. University of North Carolina Press, 2012.

Interpretation of the Intellectual School of History

The Intellectual School of history interprets Castro's Communist Cuba by examining the ideological and theoretical frameworks that shaped and justified the regime's policies and governance. This perspective focuses on the intellectual influences that informed the Cuban Revolution, including Marxism-Leninism, anti-imperialism, and nationalist thought. It explores how these ideas were adapted to the Cuban context, particularly through the writings and speeches of Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and other revolutionary leaders. The Intellectual School also considers the role of education, intellectual discourse, and the state's control over knowledge production and dissemination, analyzing how intellectuals and academics were engaged in or suppressed by the regime.

"The intellectual foundations of the Cuban Revolution were rooted in a unique blend of Marxist-Leninist theory, Cuban nationalism, and a profound commitment to anti-

imperialism, which together provided the ideological backbone for the state's policies and actions."

Kapcia, Antoni. *Cuba in Revolution: A History Since the Fifties*. Reaktion Books, 2008.

Criticism of the Intellectual Historical View

Critics of the Intellectual School's approach argue that it can sometimes overemphasize the theoretical and ideological aspects of Castro's regime, potentially neglecting the practical realities and the regime's impact on daily life. They contend that this perspective may underplay the coercive measures used to enforce ideological conformity, such as censorship, political repression, and the marginalization of dissenting intellectual voices. Additionally, critics suggest that focusing too much on the ideological rhetoric of the regime might obscure the pragmatic aspects of governance and the complexities of Cuban society under communist rule.

"While the intellectual underpinnings of the Cuban Revolution are significant, they must be critically examined in light of the state's authoritarian practices, which often stifled genuine intellectual debate and freedom of expression."

De la Fuente, Alejandro. *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba*. University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

Interpretation of the Marxist School of History

The Marxist School of history interprets Castro's Communist Cuba as a revolutionary state fundamentally shaped by Marxist-Leninist ideology. This perspective emphasizes the economic and class struggle aspects of the Cuban Revolution, viewing the state's actions as efforts to dismantle the capitalist structures

and implement socialist principles. The Marxist School focuses on the nationalization of industries, land reforms, the redistribution of wealth, and the creation of a planned economy as means to eliminate class disparities and promote social equality. It also examines Cuba's alignment with the Soviet Union and its role in the global socialist movement, emphasizing the ideological commitment to anti-imperialism and solidarity with other revolutionary movements.

"The Cuban Revolution represented a profound break from capitalist exploitation and imperialist control, striving to build a socialist society based on principles of equality, social justice, and economic self-sufficiency."

Chomsky, Aviva. *A History of the Cuban Revolution*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Criticism of the Marxist Historical View

Critics of the Marxist School's approach argue that it can sometimes idealize or romanticize the Cuban Revolution, downplaying the authoritarian aspects of Castro's rule and the limitations of the socialist experiment. They contend that this perspective may overlook the human rights abuses, lack of political freedoms, and economic challenges faced by the Cuban population under communist governance. Additionally, critics suggest that the Marxist view might not fully account for the complexities and contradictions within Cuban society, including issues of race, gender, and political dissent, which were often suppressed or marginalized by the state.

"While the Cuban Revolution's goals of social equity and anti-imperialism are noteworthy, the reality of political repression and economic hardship under Castro's regime complicates the narrative of revolutionary idealism."

Interpretation of the Annales School of History

The Annales School of history, known for its emphasis on long-term historical structures and broader societal contexts, interprets Castro's Communist Cuba by examining the deep-rooted social, economic, and environmental factors that shaped the Cuban Revolution and its aftermath. This perspective looks beyond political events and figures to understand the historical processes and collective mentalities that influenced Cuban society. The Annales School considers the impact of geography, climate, and demographic trends, as well as the long-standing issues of inequality and colonial legacies. It also explores how cultural and social structures, such as family life, education, and public health, were transformed under the revolutionary government.

"The Cuban Revolution must be seen within the context of a long history of social inequality, economic dependency, and colonial exploitation, which provided the fertile ground for revolutionary change and the reshaping of Cuban society."

Gott, Richard. *Cuba: A New History*. Yale UP, 2004.

Criticism of the Annales Historical View

Critics of the Annales School's approach argue that its focus on long-term structures and broad societal trends can sometimes obscure the importance of political dynamics, individual agency, and immediate events. They contend that while this perspective provides valuable insights into the underlying conditions that shaped Cuba, it may underplay the specific actions and policies of the Castro government, including instances of political

repression and human rights abuses. Additionally, critics suggest that the Annales approach might not fully account for the complexities and nuances of ideological, cultural, and international influences on the Cuban state.

"The Annales approach, with its emphasis on long-term historical structures, can sometimes downplay the decisive role of political leadership and the immediate impact of state policies on the lives of ordinary Cubans."

Kapcia, Antoni. *Leadership in the Cuban Revolution: The Unseen Story*. Zed Books, 2014.

Interpretation of the Postcolonial School of History

The Postcolonial School of history interprets Castro's Communist Cuba by examining the legacies of colonialism and imperialism in shaping the island's political, social, and economic structures. This perspective highlights how Cuba's colonial past, characterized by Spanish colonization and later U.S. influence, influenced the emergence of nationalist and anti-imperialist sentiments that fueled the Cuban Revolution. It also focuses on how the revolutionary government sought to break free from these colonial and neocolonial dependencies, asserting a new national identity and sovereignty. The Postcolonial School emphasizes Cuba's role in global anti-colonial movements and its solidarity with other postcolonial nations, particularly in Africa and Latin America, as part of its foreign policy and ideological stance.

"The Cuban Revolution represented a profound rejection of the colonial and neocolonial order, as it sought to dismantle the structures of dependency and create an autonomous, socialist state in defiance of Western imperialism."

Gott, Richard. *Cuba: A New History*. Yale UP, 2004.

Criticism of the Postcolonial Historical View

Critics of the Postcolonial School's approach argue that it can sometimes romanticize or idealize the Cuban Revolution's anti-imperialist and nationalist aspects, potentially overlooking the internal contradictions and authoritarian practices of the regime. They contend that this perspective may underplay the human rights abuses, restrictions on political freedoms, and economic hardships faced by the Cuban population under communist rule. Additionally, critics suggest that focusing too heavily on external influences and anti-colonial rhetoric might obscure the complexities of Cuban society and the diversity of experiences among its people.

"While the Postcolonial perspective rightly emphasizes Cuba's struggle against imperialism, it can sometimes gloss over the regime's authoritarianism and the limitations imposed on civil liberties and political pluralism."

Pérez, Louis A. *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*. Oxford UP, 1995.

Chapter 7 - Foundations of the Cuban Revolution

Key Points

1. **Background of the Spanish-American War:**

- a. **Cuban Independence Struggle:** Cuba was fighting for independence from Spanish rule, which resonated with the American public due to reports of Spanish atrocities.
- b. **USS Maine Incident:** The explosion of the USS Maine in Havana harbor, likely caused by accidental coal gas ignition but attributed to a Spanish sea mine, led to American intervention.
- c. **War Declaration:** President William McKinley, pressured by public sentiment and yellow journalism, secured congressional approval to intervene, resulting in the Spanish-American War.

2. **Aftermath of the Spanish-American War:**

- a. **US Victory and Treaty:** The US swiftly defeated Spanish forces, leading to Cuba's nominal independence, although Cuban rebel leaders were excluded from negotiations.
- b. **Platt Amendment:** The US granted formal independence in 1902 but retained significant control through the Platt Amendment, allowing intervention and establishing Guantanamo Bay.
- c. **US Occupation:** Following election fraud and civil unrest in 1905, the US occupied Cuba until 1909, demonstrating its readiness to intervene in Cuban affairs.

3. **Economic Boom and Bust:**

- a. **Prosperity and Dependency:** Cuba's economy thrived during World War I due to high sugar prices but suffered a severe downturn when prices fell in 1920, leading to American economic dominance.
- b. **Tourism and Crime:** By the 1920s, Cuba became a tourist destination and a hub for organized crime, with American businesses dominating key industries.
- c. **Political Unrest:** The global economic crisis in 1929 led to protests against President Gerardo Machado, resulting in

US intervention and his exile, paving the way for military control by figures like Fulgencio Batista.

4. **Rise of Fulgencio Batista:**

- a. **Background and Political Rise:** Batista, from humble beginnings, rose through the military ranks and played a crucial role in the 1933 coup, becoming Cuba's de facto ruler.
- b. **Presidency and Reforms:** Elected president in 1940, Batista implemented progressive reforms, maintained close ties with the US, and contributed to World War II efforts.
- c. **Coup and Return to Power:** After relocating to the US, Batista returned to Cuba in 1952, staged a coup when his party trailed in the election, and seized power again.

5. **Prelude to the Revolution:**

- a. **Economic and Social Issues:** Despite economic development, corruption, inequality, and American control over the economy persisted, with one-third of Cubans living in poverty.
- b. **Opposition to Batista:** Leftist opposition grew, led by Fidel Castro, a lawyer and activist against US imperialism. After failed legal efforts, Castro and his brother Raul founded a resistance movement, setting the stage for the Cuban Revolution.

Overview

Chapter 20 details the historical foundations leading up to the Cuban Revolution, highlighting the impact of the Spanish-American War, US intervention, and economic fluctuations on Cuba's political landscape. The rise of Fulgencio Batista and the subsequent economic and social issues fostered an environment ripe for revolution, with Fidel Castro emerging as a key opposition leader. This chapter underscores the complex interplay of foreign influence, economic dependency, and internal strife that culminated in the Cuban Revolution.

Background of the Spanish-American War

Cuba, a small island nation, played a pivotal role during the Cold War, situated less than 100 miles from the American coast and becoming the focal point of one of the most perilous moments in the conflict. Understanding Cuba's trajectory necessitates a journey back to the late 19th century. During this period, the United States, propelled by an accident and yellow journalism, engaged in a war with Spain, whose colonial empire was in decline. By this time, Cuba was already fighting for independence from Spanish rule, a struggle that deeply resonated with the American public. Reports of alleged Spanish atrocities, though possibly exaggerated, fueled American desire to intervene.

In response to potential violence against Americans in Havana, the US dispatched the USS Maine in January 1898. The Maine, a US Navy armored cruiser, exploded off the Cuban coast, killing over 200 American sailors. Though modern historians believe the explosion was likely due to an accidental ignition of coal gases, it was attributed at the time to a Spanish sea mine, leading to public outcry and demands for retaliation. President William McKinley, pressured by public sentiment and sensationalist media led by figures like William Randolph Hearst, sought congressional approval to intervene in Cuba's revolution, resulting in a declaration of war on Spain on April 25, 1898.

The Aftermath of the Spanish-American War

The ensuing conflict was decidedly one-sided, with the United States swiftly dismantling Spanish forces in Cuba and simultaneously seizing Spanish colonies in Puerto Rico and the Philippines. Spain surrendered by July, and a peace treaty granted Cuba its independence. However, the Cuban rebel leaders were notably absent from the peace negotiations, highlighting the limited role Cuba played in shaping its own future.

In 1902, the United States enacted the Platt Amendment, granting formal independence to Cuba on May 20th. Yet, Cubans

today often do not recognize this as true independence. The subsequent Cuban-American Treaty of Relations leased Guantanamo Bay to the United States, establishing a military port and, later, a controversial prison. This treaty included a clause permitting US intervention for the preservation of Cuban independence and the protection of life, property, and individual liberty. When President Estrada Palma rigged the 1905 election, resulting in civil unrest, both factions requested US intervention. President Theodore Roosevelt's Secretary of War, William H. Taft, declared himself the provisional leader of Cuba, initiating an American occupation that lasted several years. This occupation ended in 1909 following elections, but it underscored the US's readiness to intervene in Cuban affairs.

Economic Boom and Bust

The following years were economically prosperous for Cuba, particularly during World War I, which created a sugar shortage. Cuba capitalized on its primary cash crop, experiencing significant economic growth. However, reliance on a single commodity posed risks, and when sugar prices plummeted in 1920, the Cuban economy suffered. Foreign, primarily American, corporations began investing heavily in Cuban industries, leading to economic dependency and capital outflow. By the 1920s, Cuba became a haven for American tourists, with American-owned businesses proliferating. This era saw the rise of organized crime and Cuba's transformation into a Caribbean Las Vegas, with gambling and prostitution becoming significant economic sectors.

President Gerardo Machado, increasingly unpopular for his broken promises, faced widespread discontent. The global economic downturn in 1929 exacerbated Cuba's problems, leading to protests and terrorism. US intervention in 1933, threatening invasion, forced Machado into exile and installed a

temporary government, which quickly gave way to military control by figures like Fulgencio Batista.

Rise of Fulgencio Batista

Fulgencio Batista, born in 1901 to war veterans, rose from modest beginnings to become a pivotal figure in Cuban politics. Initially a laborer, Batista joined the military, where his skills as a stenographer facilitated his rise. He played a crucial role in the 1933 coup and subsequently became the de facto ruler of Cuba, although nominally, the country was led by a series of weak presidents.

In 1940, Cuba adopted a new constitution that allowed unions and healthcare reforms. Batista was elected president and pursued progressive reforms tempered with capitalist principles, maintaining favorable relations with the United States. His administration participated in World War II, contributing to the Battle of the Caribbean. In 1944, barred from re-election, Batista saw his chosen successor defeated and subsequently relocated to the United States, where he lived lavishly, allegedly on funds taken from the Cuban treasury. Despite being elected to the Cuban senate from abroad, Batista returned to Cuba to contest the 1952 election but, finding his party trailing, staged a coup.

Prelude to the Revolution

By the time Batista seized power, Cuba was economically developed but plagued by corruption and inequality. One in three Cubans lived in poverty, and American control over the economy deepened. Opposition to Batista grew, particularly among leftists. Fidel Castro, a prominent figure in this opposition, emerged as a key leader. Born in 1926 to immigrant parents, Castro became a lawyer and activist against imperialism, particularly US influence. After several failed attempts to effect change through legal means, Castro, along with his brother Raul, founded a resistance movement, setting the stage for the Cuban Revolution.

Chapter 8 - Emergence of Castro's Cuba

Key Points

1. Cuba in the 1950s:

- a. **Economic Vulnerabilities:** Cuba's economy was heavily reliant on sugar, making it a monoculture economy. Three-fifths of the workforce was employed in sugar plantations, and sugar accounted for a quarter of exports.
- b. **Dependence on the U.S.:** The United States was Cuba's largest trading partner, paying inflated rates for sugar and supplying manufactured goods. American investors controlled significant portions of Cuba's infrastructure, creating economic dependency.
- c. **Wealth Disparities:** There was a significant gap between the wealthy elite and the impoverished masses.

2. Political Weakness:

- a. **Platt Amendment:** Incorporated into the Cuban Constitution in 1903, it allowed the U.S. to intervene militarily and restricted Cuba's ability to engage with other nations.
- b. **Dictatorship of Batista:** Fulgencio Batista seized power through a coup in 1952, supported by Cuba's elite and American business interests. His regime was marked by corruption and political repression.

3. Opposition to Batista:

- a. **Resistance:** Batista faced resistance from student groups, rural workers, and the Communist Party. His increasing corruption and repression led to a loss of U.S. support.
- b. **Fidel Castro:** A lawyer and member of the Partido Ortodoxo, Castro's political ambitions were thwarted by Batista's coup, leading him to pursue revolutionary action.

4. Moncada Barracks Attack:

- a. **Failed Assault:** In 1953, Castro and his followers attempted to seize the Moncada Barracks but failed, resulting in

Castro's arrest. His "History Will Absolve Me" speech during his trial outlined his revolutionary ideals.

- b. **26th of July Movement:** The failed assault led to the formation of this movement, named after the attack date. Castro gained popularity due to the brutal treatment of rebels by Batista's regime.

5. **Influence of Che Guevara:**

- a. **Meeting in Mexico:** After his release in 1955, Castro met Che Guevara in Mexico. Guevara, influenced by the CIA-backed overthrow in Guatemala, emphasized guerrilla warfare and anti-American sentiments.
- b. **Granma Attack:** In 1956, Castro, Guevara, and others launched an attack from Mexico, which failed. However, they continued their efforts in the Sierra Maestra mountains, gaining support from local peasants.

6. **Revolutionary Momentum:**

- a. **Radio Propaganda:** Castro used radio broadcasts to spread his message, portraying himself as a freedom fighter. His forces grew as they gained popular support.
- b. **U.S. Embargo:** In 1957, the U.S. withdrew support for Batista, imposing an embargo that weakened his regime and bolstered Castro's forces.

7. **Fall of Batista:**

- a. **Autumn Offensive of 1958:** Castro's guerrilla tactics led to decisive victories, causing Batista's regime to collapse. In January 1959, Castro and his forces entered Havana, marking the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.

Overview

Chapter 21 details the emergence of Fidel Castro's Cuba, highlighting the economic and political challenges of the 1950s, the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista, and the revolutionary efforts led by Castro and Che Guevara. Through guerrilla warfare, strategic propaganda, and growing popular support, Castro successfully overthrew Batista's regime, transforming Cuba's political landscape and establishing a new government. This

chapter underscores the significant events and figures that shaped the Cuban Revolution.

Introduction

The United States was Cuba's most significant trading partner, paying inflated rates for Cuban sugar and supplying American manufactured goods to Cuban markets. This economic relationship was crucial; any disruption, such as the repressive regime of Fulgencio Batista, could severely impact Cuba's economy. Additionally, American investors controlled substantial portions of Cuba's gas, electricity, rail, and banking systems, creating a deep economic connection between the two countries. This dependence on the United States was further complicated by a significant disparity in wealth between a small number of affluent Cuban elites and the impoverished masses across the nation.

Economic Weakness in Cuba

Cuba also faced significant political vulnerabilities. Following Cuban independence after the Spanish-American War, the United States incorporated the **Platt Amendment** into the Cuban Constitution in 1903. This amendment granted the United States preferential political terms over Cuba, including the right to militarily intervene if conditions in Cuba were deemed unfavorable to U.S. interests. Furthermore, Cuba was prohibited from entering into agreements with third-party nations without U.S. approval, and the United States secured a permanent lease on the naval base at *Guantanamo Bay*. This economic reliance on the United States impeded Cuba's ability to achieve full political independence, further entrenching its dependence on American economic and political influence.

Political Weakness

Compounding Cuba's issues was the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Initially a military general and president of Cuba in the 1940s, Batista seized power through a coup in March 1952, ousting a democratically elected president and suspending the Cuban Constitution. His regime received backing from Cuba's wealthy elite and their business counterparts in the United States. Under Batista, Cuba became a hotspot for corrupt activities and interactions with the U.S. Mafia, transforming Havana into a luxurious resort destination for affluent Americans throughout the 1950s. Consequently, the disparity between the wealthy and the impoverished in Cuba continued to grow, exacerbating social and economic tensions.

Fulgencio Batista

Opposition to Batista intensified following his 1952 coup. He encountered resistance from various factions, including student groups demanding greater political rights, rural agricultural workers suffering from economic hardships, and the growing Communist Party, which opposed the prevailing economic conditions faced by ordinary Cubans. Over time, Batista's increasing corruption and political repression led to a loss of support from the U.S. government, further weakening his regime's stability.

Opposition to Batista

Turning our focus to Fidel Castro, he was an educated lawyer in Cuba who dedicated his efforts to advocating for the rights of impoverished workers. During the late 1940s, Castro participated in revolutionary movements outside of Cuba, notably in the Dominican Republic and Colombia. Upon returning to Cuba, he aspired to rise through the political ranks to challenge the corrupt government. Castro was a member of the *Partido Ortodoxo*, a left-

wing political party that supported anti-corruption measures and the nationalization of foreign businesses to retain more wealth within the nation.

Fidel Castro

The 1952 coup by Batista extinguished any hope Castro had of advancing through legitimate political channels, propelling him towards revolutionary action. This revolutionary endeavor commenced on July 26, 1953, with the assault on the Moncada Barracks. Castro, along with a small cadre of followers, attempted to seize the Moncada military barracks in an effort to overthrow Batista. The attack was a complete failure, resulting in Castro's arrest and subsequent trial. During his trial, he delivered the renowned "History Will Absolve Me" speech, in which he advocated for the restoration of the Constitution, land reform, educational reform, and an end to corruption. Although Castro was sentenced to 15 years in prison, he served only two years before being released.

Moncada Barracks Attack

The failed assault on the Moncada Barracks gave rise to the 26th of July Movement, Castro's political and military initiative aimed at overthrowing Batista. The brutal treatment of the rebels by Batista's regime attracted negative attention and elevated Castro's status among the common people. In 1954, Batista held elections to create an appearance of democracy, but they were neither free nor fair, especially as Castro remained imprisoned. In 1955, seeking to curry favor with the populace, Batista released many political prisoners, including Castro.

Following his release, Castro relocated to Mexico, where he organized the 26th of July Movement and met Che Guevara, who significantly influenced his revolutionary ideals. Meanwhile, anti-Batista sentiments continued to grow in Cuba, prompting

Batista to cancel future elections in an attempt to quell the increasing unrest.

Effects of the Moncada Assault

While in Mexico, Fidel Castro was profoundly influenced by Che Guevara, an Argentinian revolutionary. Guevara, who was staunchly anti-capitalist and anti-American, aimed to incite a revolution in Cuba. His ideology was significantly shaped by the overthrow of Guatemala's democratically elected president in 1954, an event supported by the U.S. **Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)**. Guevara believed in the effectiveness of guerrilla warfare and the necessity of garnering support from the common people to achieve revolutionary success. He viewed the United States as a consistent adversary of the populace, perpetually supporting repressive Latin American governments.

Impact of Che Guevara

The 26th of July Movement, led by Fidel Castro, launched the "Granma" attack, during which over 80 fighters sailed from Mexico to southern Cuba with the intention of seizing Santiago and igniting a revolution. The attack failed, resulting in most of the attackers being killed or captured. However, Castro, his brother Raúl, and Che Guevara managed to escape to the Sierra Maestra mountains, where they continued their revolutionary efforts.

In the Sierra Maestra, the movement gradually gained momentum as local peasants, disillusioned with the government, began to view Castro as a more supportive figure. Castro's promise of reforms once victorious resonated with the rural population, contributing to the growth of the revolutionary movement. Guevara's influence was instrumental in shaping the strategies and ideologies of the revolution, emphasizing guerrilla warfare and the importance of popular support.

The Granma Attack

Fidel Castro effectively utilized radio broadcasts to disseminate propaganda and conducted interviews with the foreign press, portraying himself as a champion of freedom. As Castro's forces, along with other rebel groups, intensified their attacks, Batista's repressive measures increased. In 1957, the United States withdrew its support for Batista and eventually imposed a comprehensive embargo on the Cuban government, which significantly bolstered Castro's forces.

Propaganda and Guerrilla Warfare

Fidel Castro adeptly harnessed the power of radio broadcasts to spread propaganda, enhancing his image as a valiant freedom fighter. Through strategic interviews with the foreign press, he effectively communicated his revolutionary ideals and garnered international attention. As Castro's forces, along with other rebel factions, escalated their attacks, Batista's regime responded with increasing repression.

In 1957, the United States withdrew its support for Batista, culminating in a full embargo against the Cuban government. This shift significantly bolstered Castro's forces by undermining Batista's political and military standing.

The *Autumn Offensive* of 1958 marked a turning point, with Castro's guerrilla tactics leading to a series of decisive victories. Batista's regime, weakened and unable to withstand the relentless pressure, eventually collapsed. In December 1958, Batista fled Cuba, and by January 1959, Fidel Castro, his brother Raúl, Che Guevara, and the 26th of July Movement triumphantly entered Havana, taking control of the government and signaling a new era in Cuban history.

Conclusion

The ascent of Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution was characterized by substantial economic and political challenges, fervent opposition to Batista's corrupt regime, and strategic guerrilla warfare. Castro's leadership, bolstered by his alliance with Che Guevara, was instrumental in overthrowing Batista and establishing a new government in Cuba. Through adept use of propaganda and tactical warfare, Castro succeeded in rallying widespread support and transforming the nation's political landscape.

Chapter 9 - Establishment of Castro's Dictatorship

Key Points

1. Consolidation of Castro's Rule:

- a. **Government Reorganization:** After the revolution in 1959, Castro quickly restructured the government, creating the Fundamental Law of the Republic. This established a political cabinet with Castro as the prime minister, giving him ultimate political authority.
- b. **Control Over Media and Education:** Freedom of the press was severely restricted, and the government took control of the University of Havana.
- c. **Public Show Trials and Land Reform:** Supporters of Batista were publicly tried and executed. Castro's promise of land reform was fulfilled by confiscating properties from Cuban elites. Pro-Castro communists took control of labor unions.

2. Towards a One-Party State:

- a. **Formation of a Unified Party:** Castro merged various revolutionary organizations into the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations, which later became the United Party of the Socialist Revolution, and eventually the Cuban Communist Party in 1965.
- b. **Repression of Opposition:** Leaders of the 26th of July Movement who opposed the move towards communism, like Huber Matos, were arrested and charged with treason.

3. Cuban-American Relations:

- a. **Initial Support and Subsequent Deterioration:** Initially, the U.S. supported Castro's rise to power but withdrew support as he embraced communism and nationalized American-owned businesses.
- b. **Economic Agreements with the Soviet Union:** The nationalization led to economic agreements with the Soviet Union, further aligning Cuba with communist ideologies.

4. Bay of Pigs Invasion:

- a. **Failed U.S. Invasion:** In April 1961, a CIA-orchestrated invasion by Cuban exiles failed. This disaster embarrassed the U.S. and President Kennedy while providing a propaganda victory for Castro.
 - b. **Declaration of Communism:** In response, Castro declared Cuba a communist nation and a Marxist-Leninist state, further consolidating his power and aligning with the Soviet Union.
5. **Cuban-Soviet Relations:**
- a. **Deepening Alliance:** Post-invasion, the Soviet Union became Cuba's primary trade partner, extensively arming the Cuban military and providing economic support.
 - b. **Cuban Missile Crisis:** In October 1962, the discovery of Soviet missiles in Cuba led to a tense standoff. The crisis ended with the Soviet Union agreeing to remove the missiles in exchange for the U.S. promising not to invade Cuba and secretly agreeing to remove American missiles from Turkey.

Overview

Chapter 22 details how Fidel Castro established his dictatorship in Cuba following the 1959 revolution. Castro consolidated his power by reorganizing the government, restricting freedom of the press, and executing supporters of the former Batista regime. He moved swiftly towards a one-party state, repressing opposition and merging revolutionary groups into the Cuban Communist Party. Relations with the United States deteriorated as Castro nationalized American businesses and aligned with the Soviet Union, culminating in the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis. The deepening Cuban-Soviet alliance marked a significant period in Cold War history, solidifying Cuba's position as a communist state under Castro's authoritarian rule.

Consolidation of Castro's Rule

We will now examine the establishment of Castro's authoritarian state following his successful revolution in 1959. After seizing power, Castro swiftly reorganized the government under his control. The **Fundamental Law of the Republic** was drafted, essentially creating a political cabinet—a council of ministers led by Fidel Castro as prime minister—granting him ultimate political authority over the country.

Freedom of the press in Cuba was severely restricted, and the government took control of the University of Havana. Public show trials were conducted for supporters of the Batista regime and former military officers, which were followed by numerous public executions. To fulfill Castro's promise of land reform to the peasants, the property of the Cuban elites was rapidly confiscated by the government. Additionally, pro-Castro communists assumed control of the labor unions in Cuba, consolidating his power further.

Towards a One-Party State

Castro swiftly advanced towards establishing a one-party state in Cuba. He consolidated various revolutionary organizations, including his own *26th of July Movement*, under the umbrella of the **Integrated Revolutionary Organizations**. This coalition later evolved into the **United Party of the Socialist Revolution**, led by Castro. In 1965, this organization was transformed into the **Cuban Communist Party**, solidifying the one-party system that governed Cuba.

Opposition to this move towards communism was met with severe repression. Notably, leaders of the *26th of July Movement* who resisted this transition, such as Huber Matos, were arrested and charged with treason against the revolution, showcasing the regime's intolerance towards dissent.

Cuban-American Relations

Cuban-American relations deteriorated significantly as Castro advanced towards a one-party state and nationalized American-owned businesses. Initially, the United States supported Castro's rise to power, having withdrawn their support from the Batista regime. However, Castro's embrace of communism within Cuba strained this support. The nationalization of foreign-owned businesses, including prominent companies such as Royal Dutch Shell, Texaco, Standard Oil, Coca-Cola, and Sears, led to a definitive withdrawal of American backing.

This loss of support from the United States compelled Cuba to seek economic agreements with the Soviet Union, further solidifying its alignment with communist ideologies. The tension between Cuba and the United States escalated, culminating in the Bay of Pigs invasion, a failed attempt by U.S.-backed exiles to overthrow Castro's government. This event underscored the deepening rift between the two nations and marked a significant moment in the Cold War.

Bay of Pigs Invasion

The Bay of Pigs invasion was a key component of President Dwight Eisenhower's **New Look** program aimed at containing communism. The CIA orchestrated covert operations to support anti-communist movements across the Americas. In 1960, the CIA utilized Guatemala as a training base for Cuban expatriates, preparing them for an assault on Castro's Cuba with the hope of inciting a popular uprising against his regime.

The invasion, executed under President John F. Kennedy in April 1961, was disastrous from the outset. The Cuban military anticipated the attack, there was no significant popular support, and the United States provided only limited military assistance. The Bay of Pigs invasion became a major embarrassment for both

the United States and President Kennedy, while serving as a significant propaganda victory for Castro.

In response, Castro consolidated his power by arguing that unity was essential to resist future U.S. invasions. He declared Cuba a fully communist nation under a one-party state and proclaimed himself a Marxist-Leninist. This move further entrenched Cuba's alignment with the Soviet Union and heightened Cold War tensions.

Cuban-Soviet Relations

Following the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Soviet Union emerged as Cuba's primary trade partner. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev pledged to defend Cuba against any future U.S. aggression, declaring the **Monroe Doctrine** obsolete. The Soviet Union began to arm the Cuban military extensively and provided millions of dollars in credit and equipment. This support included the deployment of long-range nuclear missiles in Cuba, culminating in the Cuban Missile Crisis. This period marked a significant deepening of the alliance between Cuba and the Soviet Union, solidifying Cuba's position as a key player in the Cold War dynamics.

Cuban Missile Crisis

In October 1962, an American CIA U2 surveillance jet discovered Soviet missiles being installed in Cuba, initiating the Cuban Missile Crisis. The United States responded by implementing a naval blockade around Cuba to prevent further missiles from arriving, while also mobilizing its military for a potential full-scale invasion. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev equated the presence of these missiles in Cuba with American missiles stationed in Turkey.

The crisis was ultimately resolved through a negotiated agreement. The Soviet Union agreed to remove the missiles from Cuba, and in return, the United States promised not to invade Cuba. Additionally, President John F. Kennedy secretly agreed to remove American missiles from Turkey after the U.S. elections in November 1962. Although Fidel Castro was dissatisfied with the Soviet decision to withdraw the missiles, he portrayed the resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis as a propaganda victory, claiming that he had played a crucial role in safeguarding Cuba from future U.S. invasions.

Chapter 10 - Opposition in Castro's Cuba

Key Points

1. Sources of Opposition:

- a. **Economic Policies and Authoritarianism:** Failures in economic policies and increasing authoritarianism sparked resistance against Castro's regime. The revolution's unfulfilled promises and disparities between Castro's international popularity and internal realities further fueled dissent.
- b. **Diverse Opposition Groups:** Opposition stemmed from former landowners and industrialists, peasants affected by collectivization, pro-American Cubans, writers and artists facing censorship, and academics protesting the loss of academic freedom.

2. Suppression of Dissent:

- a. **Curtailement of Freedoms:** Freedoms of speech and press were severely restricted, and show trials were conducted to intimidate political opponents.
- b. **Notable Case:** Poet Heberto Padilla's arrest and public trial diminished Castro's support domestically and internationally, yet instilled fear among artists during the "gray period" of the 1970s.

3. Weak and Fragmented Opposition:

- a. **Lack of Organization:** Opposition remained weak and disorganized, lacking the coordination to effectively challenge the government.
- b. **Strong Police State:** The regime's powerful surveillance apparatus and propaganda effectively portrayed dissent as unpatriotic, further stifling opposition efforts.

4. Surveillance and Repression:

- a. **Intelligence and Surveillance:** The Cuban State Police's General Directorate of Intelligence (DGI), modeled after the Soviet KGB, played a crucial role in uncovering opposition.
- b. **Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs):** Local communities and workplaces organized CDRs to

report counter-revolutionary activities, with a significant portion of the population involved.

5. **Labor Camps and Re-Education:**

- a. **Repressive Measures:** Political prisoners, youths adopting American styles, and homosexuals were sent to labor camps for re-education in revolutionary doctrine, minimizing opposition through extensive surveillance and repression.

6. **Assassination Attempts:**

- a. **Numerous Attempts:** Castro survived hundreds of assassination attempts, many orchestrated by the CIA and local political opponents. The failure of these attempts bolstered Castro's propaganda, portraying him as invincible.

7. **Emigration as a Tool:**

- a. **Exodus of Dissidents:** Over 350,000 Cubans fled the island, primarily to the United States. Emigration of dissenters reduced internal opposition, but also led to a brain drain of skilled and educated individuals.
- b. **Marl Boatlift:** In 1980, over 125,000 Cubans departed for Florida, including many prisoners and mentally ill individuals, after protests against food rations and economic hardships.

8. **Enduring Regime:**

- a. **Failure to Overthrow Castro:** Despite significant opposition, limited internal organization and the exodus of dissenters ensured that opposition efforts never succeeded in overthrowing the regime.

Overview

Chapter 23 discusses the various sources and methods of opposition to Fidel Castro's authoritarian regime in Cuba. Despite economic failures, increasing authoritarianism, and unfulfilled promises of the revolution, opposition remained weak and fragmented. The regime effectively suppressed dissent through restrictions on freedoms, extensive surveillance, repressive measures, and strategic propaganda. Numerous assassination

attempts on Castro's life failed, further solidifying his position. The emigration of hundreds of thousands of Cubans, particularly skilled and educated individuals, reduced internal opposition but also posed challenges for the regime. Ultimately, Castro's regime endured due to the combination of strong internal control and the limited effectiveness of opposition movements.

Consolidation of Castro's Rule

We will examine the opposition that Fidel Castro faced in his authoritarian state, an essential aspect of understanding the extent of his success in establishing a true authoritarian regime. Several factors contributed to the resistance against Castro in Cuba: failing economic policies, increasing authoritarianism in response to opposition, disillusionment with the revolution's unfulfilled promises, and the disparity between Castro's international popularity and the internal realities within Cuba.

Castro's primary opposition stemmed from various groups: former landowners and industrialists who thrived under Batista's regime, peasants suffering due to collectivization, pro-American Cubans, writers and artists facing government censorship, and academics at the University of Havana protesting the loss of academic freedom. Following his rise to power, the state moved swiftly to suppress dissenting voices. Freedoms of speech and press, which had been limited even before Castro, were further curtailed. Show trials were conducted for political opponents to intimidate and silence them. A notable example is the poet Heberto Padilla, who criticized the revolution in his works. He was arrested, possibly tortured, and subjected to a public show trial where he was forced to confess to alleged crimes against the revolution.

Widespread outcry both within and outside of Cuba over the treatment of Heberto Padilla diminished Castro's support domestically and internationally, yet the persecution of Padilla

had a chilling effect. Artists in the 1970s entered what became known as the *gray period*, during which they were cautious not to produce anything that the state might consider counter-revolutionary. The **Cuban Constitution of 1976** guaranteed artistic freedoms, but only as long as the ideas expressed were not contrary to the revolution, thus restricting true artistic freedom.

The opposition to Castro remained largely weak and ineffective in overthrowing the regime. There was no unified and organized opposition movement; this fragmented resistance lacked the coordination needed to challenge the government effectively. The opposition had minimal support within Cuba, where the police state and surveillance apparatus were extraordinarily strong, and government propaganda successfully portrayed dissent as unpatriotic. The harsh treatment of political prisoners and counter-revolutionaries further curtailed significant opposition efforts.

In 1961, early in the regime, the Cuban State Police established the **General Directorate of Intelligence (DGI)**, modeled after the Soviet KGB. This agency played a crucial role in uncovering opposition both within and outside of Cuba. Internally, local communities and workplaces organized **Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs)** to report on counter-revolutionary activities. By 1963, a third of Cuba's population was involved with the CDRs, effectively enlisting the public to surveil each other.

Military units to aid production were established as labor camps for political prisoners and individuals accused of counter-revolutionary activities. From 1965 to 1968, tens of thousands of Cubans, including political prisoners, youths adopting American styles, and homosexuals, were sent to these camps for re-education in revolutionary doctrine. This extensive surveillance and repressive system helped to consolidate Castro's power by minimizing opposition and enforcing ideological conformity.

Fidel Castro faced hundreds of assassination attempts, many orchestrated by the United States CIA and local political opponents. The failure of these attempts became a powerful propaganda tool for Castro. In 1975, a U.S. congressional committee documented eight distinct CIA attempts to assassinate Castro between 1961 and 1965, some of which were coordinated with the U.S. Mafia, which had suffered financial losses following the Cuban Revolution. These assassination plans included infected scuba suits, exploding cigars, and poison cigars. Castro's bodyguard, Fabian Escalante, claimed that Castro survived over 600 assassination attempts, a figure used to reinforce the narrative of Castro's invincibility and popularity.

A significant factor that aided Castro in eliminating opposition was the emigration of hundreds of thousands of Cubans from the onset of the revolution through the 1980s. Over 350,000 Cubans fled the island, primarily to the United States. Some of these exiles formed cells with the intention of returning to Cuba to overthrow Castro, as exemplified by the Bay of Pigs invasion, which involved over 1,400 Cuban expatriates.

Castro leveraged this large émigré population to justify the extensive surveillance state he established, arguing that opposition still existed and needed to be monitored. Initially, Castro welcomed the departure of anti-Castro Cubans, viewing it as a means to eliminate internal dissent. The government even encouraged criminals and anti-social individuals to leave the island, often releasing prisoners and mentally ill individuals to reduce opposition within Cuba.

Emigration posed a significant problem for the Cuban regime, as many of those leaving were highly skilled and educated individuals. This brain drain led to the implementation of stringent regulations against leaving the island, though these restrictions were occasionally lifted. In 1980, over ten thousand Cubans, protesting against food rations and economic hardships, forced their way into the Peruvian Embassy in Havana seeking asylum.

Fidel Castro exploited this situation as a propaganda opportunity, declaring that those who wished to leave Cuba could do so. Consequently, over 125,000 Cubans departed for Florida during the Mariel boatlift, among them many prisoners and mentally ill individuals.

Ultimately, opposition within Cuba never succeeded in overthrowing the Castro regime, primarily due to limited internal organization and the exodus of many dissenters.

Chapter 11 - Castro's Domestic Policies

Key Points

1. Economic Challenges and Reforms:

- a. **Initial Economic Challenges:** Castro inherited a heavily sugar-dependent economy with diminished American investments and fleeing industrial managers post-revolution.
- b. **Agrarian Reform Act:** This act dismantled large estates, redistributing land but ultimately placing much of it under state control.
- c. **Nationalization and Subsidies:** The sugar industry was nationalized, rents were subsidized, and infrastructure projects were funded. Luxury goods faced import taxes, and food rationing was implemented.

2. Attempts at Diversification:

- a. **Unsuccessful Diversification:** Efforts to diversify agriculture beyond sugar failed, and industrialization efforts were limited by a shortage of skilled personnel.
- b. **Soviet Dependence:** Economic reliance shifted to the Soviet Union, with insufficient subsidies failing to fund full industrialization. The Soviet Union became the primary purchaser of Cuban sugar.

3. Economic Reforms and Failures:

- a. **10 Million Ton Harvest:** The 1970 sugar harvest aimed for record yields but fell short, showcasing the state's economic difficulties.
- b. **1976 Cuban Constitution:** The constitution solidified Castro's power, establishing a socialist state with the Communist Party as the sole political entity.

4. Economic Decline and Austerity:

- a. **1970s Reforms:** Measures to improve efficiency included introducing computers, bonuses for productive workers, and quota systems.
- b. **Austerity Measures:** In the 1980s, economic decline necessitated austerity measures, reducing consumption

and cutting expensive imports, leading to significant emigration during the Mariel boatlift.

5. **Rectification Program:**

- a. **1986 Reforms:** The program reversed earlier economic relaxations, banning farmers' markets, ending bonuses, and reducing independent farmers' land.
- b. **Special Period:** The collapse of the Soviet Union led to economic turmoil, drastic drops in income, reduced oil supplies, and strict rationing.

6. **Post-Soviet Economic Reforms:**

- a. **Openness to Reforms:** The U.S. dollar was legalized, tourism promoted, and an agreement with the U.S. allowed annual emigration. Relations with the EU and China were sought to improve the economy.

7. **Social Policies:**

- a. **Education:** Schools were nationalized, religious education confined to churches, and new textbooks were introduced. The Exemplary Parenthood Program emphasized parental involvement in education, achieving high literacy rates.
- b. **Women's Rights:** The FMC supported literacy campaigns, trained women in domestic skills, and organized daycare centers. The 1975 Family Code granted gender equality in education and careers, although women still faced traditional domestic burdens.

8. **Religion and Minority Treatment:**

- a. **Religion:** Cuba declared itself an atheist state but softened to a secular state in 1992. Churches had to avoid politics to survive.
- b. **Minorities:** Black Cubans remained economically disadvantaged despite formal desegregation. Homosexuals faced persecution, although homosexuality was decriminalized in 1979.

9. **Economic and Social Gains:**

- a. **Healthcare and Education:** Cuba established a renowned healthcare system with excellent outcomes, low infant mortality, high life expectancy, and high literacy rates supported by free education through the university level.

Overview

Chapter 24 explores Fidel Castro's domestic policies, focusing on economic strategies and social reforms. Despite significant economic challenges and attempts at diversification, Cuba remained dependent on sugar and Soviet subsidies. Reforms included nationalizing industries, introducing austerity measures, and later adopting some economic openness. Social policies emphasized education and women's rights, though traditional burdens persisted. Despite formal desegregation, black Cubans remained economically marginalized, and homosexuals faced persecution. Notable gains in healthcare and education helped maintain Castro's power, despite ongoing economic and political challenges.

Aims and Results of Castro's Domestic Policies in Cuba

We will examine the aims and results of Fidel Castro's domestic policies in Cuba, beginning with his economic strategies to consolidate his rule. Initially, Cuba's economy faced significant challenges, primarily due to a lack of diversification. The economy was heavily dependent on the sugar industry, which was underdeveloped and shrinking in market share. Following Castro's rise to power, American investments in Cuba dwindled, exacerbating economic difficulties. Additionally, many industrial managers overseeing the sugar industry fled the country after the overthrow of Batista.

In response to these economic challenges, Castro implemented several reforms. The **Agrarian Reform Act** was introduced to dismantle the *latifundias*—large estates owned by corporations or private landowners—and redistribute land to the people, although much of it ultimately came under state control. Castro also moved to nationalize the sugar industry, placing it

under government ownership. To support poorer Cubans, the government offered subsidies to lower rents and invested in infrastructure projects focused on communication and housing in urban areas. Additionally, import taxes were imposed on luxury goods, and food rationing was implemented to address food shortages in Cuba.

Attempts to diversify the economy in Cuba under Castro were largely unsuccessful, as no other crops proved as profitable as sugar. Efforts to convert sugar farms to less valuable crops like cotton led to a decline in profitable sugar yields. Industrialization efforts were also limited due to a shortage of skilled personnel, many of whom had left Cuba following the revolution. The economic break with the United States exacerbated Cuba's problems, forcing reliance on the Soviet Union for economic subsidies. However, these subsidies were insufficient to fund Cuba's industrialization. Consequently, the Soviet Union became Cuba's largest purchaser of sugar.

By 1970, the Cuban state had collectivized most of the arable land, with two-thirds of the farmland under state ownership. The 1970 sugar harvest was used as a propaganda tool to showcase the strength of Castro's economic reforms, similar to the Great Leap Forward in China or the Soviet Union's five-year plans. The 1970 harvest, known as the "10 million ton harvest," aimed to achieve a record yield but ultimately fell two million tons short of its goal. The skilled cane workers had been moved to industrial roles in previous years, and the intensive efforts to meet the harvest target depleted the soil and damaged future yields. This failed 10 million ton harvest became emblematic of the state's economic difficulties and ongoing challenges.

In response to increasing opposition and economic challenges, Castro adopted more repressive measures. After the unsuccessful 10 million ton harvest, he delegated more responsibilities to subsidiary cabinet members and government

bureaucrats, as codified in the **1976 Cuban Constitution**. This constitution positioned Castro as the Secretary of the Communist Party and head of government, declared Cuba a socialist state, and established the Communist Party as the sole political organization in the country. Local assemblies, composed of Communist Party members, provided delegates for the 600-member National Assembly, and a Council of Ministers, led by Castro, was formed from the National Assembly. The constitution allowed some autonomy to council ministers, streamlined the legal system, and permitted trade unions to voice concerns for workers' rights.

Economic reforms in the 1970s aimed to enhance efficiency and productivity. These included the introduction of computers in factories and offices, provision of bonuses and increased pay for productive workers, and the implementation of quota systems for manufacturing and sugar production. Resources and labor were allocated to the most efficient factories and localities. However, economic decline in the late 1970s and continued dependence on the Soviet Union necessitated austerity measures in the 1980s. These measures called on Cubans to make sacrifices for the national good, reduce consumption, and cut down on expensive imports. The economic hardships contributed to the mass exodus of people storming the Peruvian Embassy in 1980, leading to the Mariel boatlift, during which tens of thousands of Cubans left for Southern Florida.

In 1986, Fidel Castro initiated the **Rectification Program**, which reversed several relaxed policies from the 1970s. The program banned farmers' markets, ended bonuses and extra pay, and reduced the land controlled by independent farmers to just two percent of all arable land in Cuba. Additionally, labor unions experienced a loss of rights, leading to declines in productivity, rises in absenteeism, the growth of black markets, and deteriorating living standards.

The collapse of the Soviet Union precipitated a period known as the *Special Period*, which plunged the Cuban economy into turmoil as Russia significantly cut back its economic support. This led to a drastic drop in Cuban incomes, a reduction in oil supplies from Russia, and the implementation of strict government rationing of consumer goods.

In the post-Soviet era, Castro demonstrated openness to some economic reforms. The U.S. dollar was legalized in Cuba, tourism was promoted, and in 1994, Castro and U.S. President Bill Clinton reached an agreement allowing 20,000 Cubans annually to emigrate to the United States. Castro hoped this policy would result in remittances from Cuban emigrés, thereby introducing American currency into the Cuban economy. Additionally, he sought to improve relations with the European Union and expand economic ties with China.

Despite these economic reforms, political repression persisted. In 2003, the Cuban government escalated arrests of political opposition, culminating in the execution of Cuban dissidents who had attempted to hijack a ferry to escape to the United States. This crackdown on dissidents led to economic sanctions from the European Union, highlighting the ongoing tension between economic reform and political repression in Castro's Cuba.

In 2006, amidst Cuba's ongoing economic struggles and with Fidel Castro's health deteriorating, he stepped down from his position as head of government. His brother, Raúl Castro, subsequently assumed power. We will return in a few days for a further examination of Cuba's domestic policies.

Castro's Social Policies

One of Castro's major focuses was on education in Cuba. In 1961, the Castro regime nationalized all schools and closed all religious institutions of education. Consequently, religious instruction was

confined to the churches themselves. The government established programs for gifted and talented students, often dictating their educational paths based on assessed skills and abilities. Teachers identified as counter-revolutionary were dismissed, new textbooks were introduced, and libraries were purged of materials deemed inappropriate or contrary to revolutionary ideals. Education in Cuba was thus designed to serve the revolution.

Additionally, Cuba implemented the **Exemplary Parenthood Program**, requiring parents to actively engage in their children's education. This involved regular school visits, supervision of learning and homework, and ensuring strong attendance. The program significantly contributed to achieving one of the highest literacy rates in the world. Moreover, young men in Cuba were conscripted for three years of national service, which included military duties or social and economic work.

Women in Cuba

Women played a pivotal role in Castro's rise to power, with many being active participants in the *26th of July Movement* before the revolution. A women's guerrilla brigade supported the Castro Revolution from the mountains of the Sierra Maestra. In 1960, early in Castro's rule, the **Federación de Mujeres Cubanas (FMC)** was established. By 1975, three-quarters of all Cuban women were members of the FMC. This organization supported Cuba's literacy campaign, trained young women in domestic skills, promoted hygiene (which improved health outcomes), and organized daycare centers across the nation.

In 1975, the **Cuban Family Code** sought to address gender inequalities, particularly within the household. The code legally granted husbands and wives equal rights to education and career opportunities, extending beyond traditional roles such as nursing and teaching. It also mandated equal domestic

responsibilities at home. Women's participation in the workforce increased from 13 percent before the revolution to over 43 percent by 1975. However, despite these advancements, Cuba remained a patriarchal society. By the mid-1970s, only 25 percent of managerial positions and one-third of the National Assembly were held by women. It was not until 1986 that the first woman was appointed to the politburo, the highest echelon of the Communist Party in Cuba. Despite the 1975 Family Code, women continued to face the "double burden" of working outside the home while still bearing primary domestic responsibilities.

Castro and Religion

Cuba is predominantly a Catholic nation, but it also has Afro-Cuban religions and smaller communities of Protestants and Jews. Officially, under Castro, Cuba was declared an atheist state, reflecting the Communist disdain for religion. However, in 1992, Castro softened this stance, declaring Cuba a secular state rather than an atheist one.

In the early years of the Revolution, some Catholic clergy viewed it as an opportunity for social and economic justice, while others were concerned about the atheism inherent in communism. Although Castro was raised Catholic and educated in a Jesuit school, he identified as an atheist.

For churches to survive in Castro's Cuba, they had to operate largely outside of politics and avoid being perceived as counter-revolutionary. During the economic hardships of the *Special Period* in the 1990s, following the fall of the Soviet Union, church attendance actually increased. This period saw a resurgence in religious activity as people sought solace amid economic distress.

Treatment of Minorities

The largest minority in Cuba comprised black Cubans, descendants of enslaved Africans who had worked on sugar plantations. Their social status remained among the lowest both before and after the revolution. While many black Cubans supported the Revolution with the hope of achieving social and economic justice, the Revolution did not significantly improve their circumstances. The government formally outlawed racial segregation, but black Cubans continued to occupy the economic underclass with limited access to the political system. Castro's rhetoric on civil rights often targeted the U.S. civil rights movement and the Jim Crow South, but this did not translate into substantial action or equality within Cuba.

Moreover, Cuba under Castro was intolerant of homosexuality, viewing homosexuals as social deviants. Many were placed in special army units for rehabilitation in labor camps, where they faced persecution and abuse. In 1979, Cuba officially decriminalized homosexuality, but societal persecution persisted. Later in his life, Castro admitted to "great injustices" against homosexuals during the early years of the Revolution.

Economic and Social Gains Under Castro's Rule

Under Castro's rule, there were notable economic and social gains that helped maintain his grip on power. Cuban universal healthcare received international acclaim, establishing one of the best healthcare systems in the developing world, with outcomes sometimes surpassing those in the United States. With 530 doctors for every 10,000 people, Cuba boasted the second-best healthcare access in Latin America. Additionally, Cuba had the lowest infant mortality rates in Latin America, one of the highest life expectancies in the Americas, and a literacy rate exceeding 98 percent, supported by universal free education through the university level.

Chapter 12 - Castro's Foreign Policy

Key Points

1. **Early Soviet Alliance:**

- a. **Military Agreement with the Soviet Union:** Following the Bay of Pigs invasion, Castro secured Soviet military support, including ballistic missiles, solidifying Cuba's defense and strengthening Castro's position.
- b. **Cuban Missile Crisis:** The crisis ended with the U.S. guaranteeing not to invade Cuba, further cementing Castro's rule and enhancing his regime's stability through propaganda.

2. **Economic Dependency on the Soviet Union:**

- a. **Economic and Military Aid:** The Soviet Union provided crucial economic subsidies, military equipment, training, and support for sugar purchases, essential for sustaining Cuba's economy and Castro's regime.

3. **Support for National Liberation Movements:**

- a. **Global Revolutionary Aid:** Castro supported revolutionary movements in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, aligning with his anti-imperialist ideals and securing allies.
- b. **Frictions with Soviet Union:** Despite occasional tensions, Castro's commitment to supporting global struggles against imperialism remained steadfast.

4. **Involvement in Africa:**

- a. **Angolan Civil War:** Cuban forces played a significant role in supporting the MPLA against UNITA, aligning with Castro's anti-apartheid stance and bolstering his domestic and international image.
- b. **Costly Engagement:** The involvement in Angola was economically burdensome and resulted in significant Cuban casualties, though it enhanced Castro's standing among African liberation movements.

5. **Impact of the Soviet Union's Collapse:**

- a. **End of Soviet Support:** The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 led to severe economic hardship in Cuba, marking the beginning of the Special Period characterized by austerity measures.

- b. **Shift in Foreign Policy:** To stabilize the economy, Castro welcomed foreign investments and formed new alliances, notably with Venezuela under Hugo Chávez, which provided crucial economic relief through oil supplies.

Overview

Chapter 25 delves into Fidel Castro's foreign policies and their role in maintaining his power. Castro's early alliance with the Soviet Union provided essential economic and military support, solidifying his regime. His commitment to supporting global revolutionary movements bolstered his international standing and secured allies, despite creating tensions with the Soviet Union. Cuban involvement in the Angolan Civil War exemplified Castro's dedication to anti-imperialism and anti-apartheid struggles, enhancing his reputation despite economic and human costs. The collapse of the Soviet Union precipitated severe economic challenges for Cuba, prompting Castro to seek foreign investments and new regional alliances, notably with Venezuela, to stabilize the economy. These foreign policy maneuvers were crucial in maintaining Castro's power and navigating the complex geopolitical landscape.

Castro's Foreign Policies and Maintenance of Power

We will examine the foreign policies of Fidel Castro and how they contributed to his maintenance of power.

Castro's foreign policies were instrumental in solidifying his regime and extending his influence beyond Cuba's borders. His alignment with the Soviet Union provided economic subsidies and military support, which were crucial for sustaining the Cuban economy and ensuring national security. This alliance was solidified through Cuba's participation in the **Council for Mutual**

Economic Assistance (COMECON) and the provision of military aid during the **Cuban Missile Crisis**, which underscored Cuba's strategic importance to the Soviet Union.

Castro also engaged in supporting revolutionary movements worldwide, which bolstered his reputation as a leader of global anti-imperialism. His military and logistical support for revolutionary groups in Latin America, Africa, and Asia helped to foster a network of allies and like-minded states. Notable examples include Cuban involvement in the Angolan Civil War and support for anti-apartheid movements in South Africa. These actions not only extended Cuba's influence but also reinforced Castro's image as a champion of international socialism and anti-colonialism.

Furthermore, Castro's foreign policy successes were utilized as propaganda to strengthen his domestic position. By portraying himself as a key player on the global stage, Castro was able to cultivate a sense of national pride and solidarity among Cubans, which helped to mitigate internal dissent and opposition. This strategic use of foreign policy to enhance domestic control was a hallmark of Castro's approach to governance.

Early Years and Soviet Alliance

In the early years of Castro's rule, following the Bay of Pigs invasion, Fidel Castro signed a military defensive agreement with the Soviet Union, which brought Soviet weaponry and military advisors to Cuba. This agreement included the deployment of ballistic missiles equipped with nuclear warheads. The aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, with the United States guaranteeing not to invade Cuba, further solidified Castro's rule and aided in his consolidation of power. Both the Bay of Pigs incident and the Cuban Missile Crisis were utilized as propaganda tools to strengthen Castro's regime.

The Soviet Union became Cuba's most crucial economic and political ally, providing military equipment, training, subsidies for sugar purchases, oil, and capital assistance loans. The economic support from the Soviet Union was vital for Castro's maintenance of power. Without this assistance, it would have been exceedingly difficult for Castro to sustain his regime, and the economic situation in Cuba would have been even more dire.

Support for National Liberation Movements

Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, Fidel Castro made supporting National Liberation movements in Latin America and Africa a cornerstone of his foreign policy. These movements sought independence or resisted foreign interference, aligning with Castro's revolutionary ideals. He believed that aiding these movements would help secure allies and future trade partners, which was crucial given that the Soviet Union was Cuba's only significant ally at the time. Castro's experience in leading his own revolution in Cuba provided him with a model to assist other revolutionary movements globally.

The Soviet support for the Cuban military enabled Castro to extend his influence beyond Cuba's borders, which often led to friction with the Soviet Union, especially during the era of détente when the Soviet Union and the United States were attempting to improve relations. Despite this, Castro's commitment to international solidarity remained steadfast, as he saw it as essential to the global struggle against imperialism and for social justice.

Involvement in Africa

During the decolonization period in Africa, many newly independent states faced significant political and social unrest. Fidel Castro's Cuba actively intervened by providing troops, doctors, educators, and military advisors to support these

nascent nations. Cuban forces played a particularly prominent role in the Angolan Civil War, which lasted from 1975 into the 1990s. Following Angola's independence from Portugal, the country descended into conflict among various factions. The left-wing **Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)**, backed by Cuba and the Soviet Union, clashed with the **National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)**, supported by South Africa and the United States. Castro justified his support for the MPLA as part of the broader struggle against apartheid, framing it as a critique of U.S. civil rights policies and appealing to the African heritage of many Cubans.

Cuba's involvement in the Angolan Civil War generated positive propaganda for Castro domestically, bolstering Cuban nationalism and support for his regime. It also elevated his status as a hero among many African liberation movements. However, the war was immensely costly for Cuba, resulting in thousands of Cuban casualties and imposing a severe economic burden on a state already facing significant challenges. In 1988, both Cuba and South Africa agreed to withdraw their forces from Angola, although the civil war continued until the MPLA ultimately secured victory.

Impact of the Fall of the Soviet Union

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 had catastrophic repercussions for Cuba, terminating the financial and military support that the island had relied on for decades. This loss significantly undermined Cuba's capacity to support revolutionary movements abroad and ushered in the *Special Period* throughout the 1990s, characterized by severe economic hardship and austerity measures.

In response to the economic crisis, Fidel Castro softened his ideological stance and welcomed foreign investments from countries such as China, Canada, and Spain. This influx of capital

helped stabilize the struggling Cuban economy. Additionally, the rise of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela in 2001 provided Cuba with a new political and economic ally. Venezuelan oil began to flow into Cuba, offering much-needed economic relief and strengthening the weakened economy in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse. This alliance with Venezuela underscored a shift in Cuba's foreign policy towards forging new regional partnerships to mitigate the loss of Soviet support.

Appendix

Castro's Revolution

The Granma yacht



Figure 1

Fighters disembarking from the *Granma* onto the Cuban coast, 1956

Granma is a yacht that was used to transport 82 fighters of the Cuban Revolution from Mexico to Cuba in November 1956 to overthrow the regime of Fulgencio Batista. The 60-foot (18 m) diesel-powered vessel was built in 1943 by Wheeler Shipbuilding of Brooklyn, New York, as a light armored target practice boat, US Navy C-1994, and modified postwar to accommodate 12 people. "Granma", in English, is an affectionate term for a grandmother; the yacht is said to have been named for the previous owner's grandmother.

Granma Route, 1956



Figure 2

The route of *Granma* from Tuxpan, Mexico, to Playa Las Coloradas, Cuba, November 1956

Insurgency, 1956-1957



Figure 3

Map of Cuba showing the location of the arrival of the rebels on the *Granma* in late 1956, the rebels' stronghold in the Sierra Maestra, and Guevara and Cienfuegos' route towards Havana via Las Villas Province in December 1958

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Appendix:

Figure 1: The Granma yacht

Unknown. "Expedicionarios-del-yate-granma." Available at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landing_of_the_Granma. Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Figure 2: Granma Route, 1956

Unknown. "Granma-route-mine-20." Available at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landing_of_the_Granma. Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Figure 3: Insurgency, 1956-1957

Unknown "Revolution Map of progress." Available at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_Revolution. Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Figure 4: Key locations of the Cuban Revolution

Unknown "Cuba Rev3." Available at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_Revolution. Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Glossary

How the Bolsheviks Take Russia

Bolsheviks - A faction of the Marxist Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, led by Vladimir Lenin, which seized power in Russia in the October Revolution of 1917.

October Revolution (1917) - The second phase of the Russian Revolution, during which the Bolsheviks overthrew the Provisional Government and established a socialist state.

Provisional Government - A temporary government established in Russia after the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, which was overthrown by the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution.

Red Army - The military organization constructed under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, led by Leon Trotsky during the Russian Civil War.

Russian Civil War (1917-1922) - A conflict between the Red Army (Bolsheviks) and the White Army (anti-Bolsheviks), resulting in the consolidation of Bolshevik power and the establishment of the Soviet Union.

Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (1918) - A peace treaty signed between the Bolshevik government of Soviet Russia and the Central Powers, ending Russia's participation in World War I but ceding significant territory.

The Rise of the USSR, Lenin, and Stalin

Joseph Stalin - A Bolshevik revolutionary and political leader who became the General Secretary of the Communist Party and later the dictator of the Soviet Union.

Leon Trotsky - A key Bolshevik leader, founder of the Red Army, and a major figure in the Russian Revolution and early Soviet state.

New Economic Policy (NEP) - A policy introduced by Lenin in 1921 to revive the Soviet economy by reintroducing limited market mechanisms and private enterprise.

Soviet Union (USSR) - A socialist state established in 1922 after the victory of the Bolsheviks in the Russian Civil War, officially named the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Vladimir Lenin - The leader of the Bolsheviks and the first head of the Soviet state, whose policies laid the foundation for the USSR.

Establishment of Stalin's Regime

Collectivization - A policy of consolidating individual landholdings into collective farms, implemented by Stalin to increase agricultural productivity and consolidate state control.

Five-Year Plans - A series of nationalized plans for rapid industrialization and economic development initiated by Stalin in 1928.

Kulaks - Wealthier peasants targeted by Stalin's regime during the collectivization process, many of whom were deported or executed.

Stalin's Domestic Policies

Gosplan - The State Planning Committee responsible for economic planning and the implementation of the Five-Year Plans.

Great Terror (Great Purge) - A campaign of political repression and persecution carried out by Stalin from 1936 to 1938, resulting in the execution and imprisonment of millions of people.

Show Trials - Public trials of Stalin's political opponents during the Great Purge, characterized by forced confessions and predetermined guilty verdicts.

Stakhanovite Movement - A campaign to encourage increased productivity and labor discipline among Soviet workers, named after a miner, Alexey Stakhanov, who exceeded production targets.

Opposition to Stalin & the Purges

- Gulag** - A system of labor camps in the Soviet Union where millions of political prisoners and ordinary criminals were sent during Stalin's regime.
- NKVD** - The Soviet secret police organization responsible for carrying out the purges, including arrests, executions, and deportations.
- Sergei Kirov** - A prominent Soviet leader whose assassination in 1934 was used by Stalin as a pretext to launch the Great Purge.

Stalin's Foreign Policy

- Comintern (Communist International)** - An international organization founded by Lenin in 1919 to promote worldwide communist revolution, heavily influenced by Stalin during his rule.
- Eastern Bloc** - A group of socialist states in Eastern Europe under Soviet influence during the Cold War, established after World War II as part of Stalin's foreign policy.
- Non-Aggression Pact (Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact)** - A treaty signed in 1939 between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, agreeing to non-aggression and secretly dividing Eastern Europe into spheres of influence.
- Winter War (1939-1940)** - A conflict between the Soviet Union and Finland, where the Soviet Union attempted to annex Finnish territory but faced significant resistance.

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